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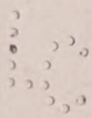

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CONGRESSMAN SWANSON

CHAPTER I.

Introducing Horace Swanson, Attorney-at-law, of Smithville; also "Doctor," who seeks to ascertain whether his friend will accept a nomination to congress from the labor reformers.

"Doctor, I wish you would step over to the post-office and get my mail for me; I am expecting Mr. Barnes in, every moment, and promised to have this complaint written out for him to sign by four o'clock, and it is that time now, and I haven't it half finished."

The speaker was a man in the early prime of life; rather under than over thirty years of age; well formed, of dark complexion, black hair and mustache, eyes dark but with an expression of kindness and good-fellowship in them which gave one the impression of a man of ready sympathies and frank, open character.

As his words indicated, he was an attorney-at-law, having a practice just sufficient to enable him to live a comfortable bachelor life, which in a town such as Smithville meant money enough to pay his board promptly, dress with some regard to the fashion and contribute an occasional dollar or two to the church or to any charitable object that appealed to his sympathy. He owns the small two-room building fronting on the main street, though a little out of the centre of the county-seat town in which he lives and practices.

The front room is his office; back of it is the one in which he sleeps; his meals he takes at one or the other of the two hotels which are open for the accommodation of the traveling public, and to such single men among the residents of the place as have no homes of their own.

Having his sleeping apartment back of his office, and boarding by the week, makes it easy to change the place of getting his meals whenever he feels so inclined; and as he is just a trifle fastidious about his food, being quite inclined to consider a good dinner one of the legitimate pleasures of every-day life, and as in Smithville, as in other towns with which the reader may possibly be acquainted, the hotels are noted for the quantity and sameness of the provender and style of cooking set before their guests rather than for the variety of either, our young attorney was in the habit of shifting his patronage from one hotel to the other and then to this or that boarding-house only to come back to his first hotel again, to again start on the rounds in search of that variety in cooks and cooking which we will all admit is at least equal to a pickle as an appetiser.

Not that our friend was a glutton or a gormandizer; he was far from it. He did not approach either, in his nature or in his habits. He was simply only just a little bit of an epicure.

There was nothing the matter with his appetite. Few men engaged in what might be called sedentary pursuits had a better appetite than he; and he always enjoyed his breakfast of fried ham and eggs and mashed potatoes with coffee and bread served up regularly from year's end to year's end at the Eagle Hotel, just so long as he stayed there. The same can be said of

the roast beef and boiled potatoes and cabbage which as regularly came on for dinner; he enjoyed them just so long as he remained there and ate them. When they began to cloy his appetite he exchanged them, for a time, for the fried beefsteak and boiled eggs and rice which always awaited those who sat at breakfast in the Smithville House in the next square; awaited them with the same never-failing certainty with which, at this hostelry, they were served at dinner with boiled mutton, cold beef tongue and salad of onions chopped fine and mixed with potatoes.

Our friend always enjoyed the bill of fare at the Smithville House just as he did that at the Eagle Hotel, and just as he changed the Eagle Hotel with its ham and fried eggs, its roast beef and boiled cabbage, for the Smithville House with beefsteak and boiled eggs, with roast mutton and cold tongue, just so he changed the Smithville House and these latter viands for Mrs. Pepsin's boarding-house breakfast of oatmeal and milk toast, and her dinners of stewed chicken and brown bread with asparagus cooked in milk and baked apples in side dishes.

And just as he enjoyed the former bills of fare in their turn, so in its turn he enjoyed that provided by the widow Pepsin, because each was a change. And as he never complained, but, on the contrary, always praised the cooking and proved his liking for it by eating heartily, he was a general favorite with landlord and landlady; and at his coming was always given a welcome that had in it something a trifle more cordial than would naturally be inspired by the knowledge that his board bill would certainly be paid at the end of the week.

He was, in fact, quite a general favorite. Without

being egotistical, he yet had sufficient confidence in himself to feel at ease under most circumstances and in any society he entered. Without being excessively ambitious for honors or place he yet asserted himself sufficiently to establish and maintain an individuality which gave him local prominence and influence among his townspeople; and this, sustained and increased by the prompt response which by nature he was inclined to give to appeals to his sympathies, caused him to be looked upon by the people both of town and country as a young man with a possible future before him.

He was not regarded as a very hard worker in the profession, yet was never accused of neglecting the interests of a client entrusted to his care. He did not burn midnight oil in any considerable quantities, yet was ready with his briefs on court day, and, arguing his cases before judge or jury, was usually found to be in possession of all attainable evidence relative to the case under trial.

He had never engaged very actively in politics; nature had not endowed him with those qualities of mind or heart which go to the making of a rank partisan. True, he voted his party ticket straight in state and national elections, but he had never engaged in what those who manipulate the wires and share the boodle are pleased to call "practical politics;" and in the few public speeches he had made in the previous election in behalf of his party candidate, and by remarks made in conversation at the hotel and other places he had shown a trifle more sympathy with the reform movements of the day than had the leaders of his party generally.

And particularly of late, during the few months previous to the opening of our story, had he dropped

several remarks in a semi-public way which had provoked adverse criticism if not downright censure from the more strict party leaders, and had also—unthought of by him—given birth to certain ideas and schemes in the brains of a few reformers in the community of which, although they were eventually to affect him most directly, he had as yet no knowledge or conception.

One of the most immediate results of these unpremeditated expressions of sympathy with the labor reformers had been to draw to himself—rather in the shape of an admirer and servant than an equal—the person of whom he had made the simple request to bring his mail at the opening of this story, and whom he addressed by the title of Doctor.

Whether or not he knew the real name of his humble friend I have no means of ascertaining. The writer of this never knew it, or if so, has forgotten it. Neither do I know where he was born or what his age may have been, except that his appearance indicated a man in middle life or approaching it.

In stature he was slightly below the average height, light complexion, tanned to brown by exposure to the sun and wind, light hair inclined to curl at the ends, and eyes of the softest blue; eyes that a young mother might go into raptures over in her first babe, but which in a grown man indicated unfitness for the vicissitudes of life, and in this case helped to give an expression to the face that told all too plainly how, in a struggle for the survival of the fittest, where brute strength and animal cunning constitute the elements of success, being both the attacking and defensive forces, he stood no chance whatever of being among the victors. Indeed, one could not help seeing at a glance that he

had not even entered the strife, but had stood aside and apart from it; stood unresisting and without arms of any kind in his hands where—in all probability—he had been thrust in the early hours of his existence by his more insistent fellow men who struggled for recognition and place.

In body, he was little better fitted for a contest with his fellows than in his mental qualities. Though well proportioned and graceful withal, his form was slight and disclosed a lack of that tension which is only imparted by a strong personal will, born of confidence in self, and consciousness of a fixed purpose in life.

His title of Doctor, commonly abbreviated to "Doc." had attached to him from the fact that he exhibited considerable knowledge of medical terms and of the structure and uses of the different organs of the human body; and from the farther fact that he was in the habit of vending a decoction of herbs of his own preparation which he claimed to have discovered to be of great value in the cure of malarial diseases, common to that section. This decoction—which at least was not harmful in its effects, and may possibly have been a very good remedy for ordinary cases of fevers and agues—he put up in such second-hand bottles as he could procure, and sold about the country to whoever had the requisite amount of confidence, and a quarter of a dollar to invest.

In what manner or where he had obtained his knowledge of medical terms no one appeared to know or care. Possibly he had had advantages when a youth which his extreme diffidence and lack of self-assertion had made it in his manhood impossible to profit by. More probably he had picked up this knowledge sur-

reptitiously from the library of some physician in whose office or stable he had had employment. He never spoke of his earlier life and though he claimed to be the discoverer of the compound which he vended, and which he unquestionably believed to possess great curative powers, he yet did not attempt to have it patented, thus securing to himself the exclusive right of selling; but, on the contrary, unhesitatingly proclaimed the names and properties of the herbs entering into it to anyone who asked about it; while the price at which he sold it was but barely sufficient to pay for his work in searching for and preparing the ingredients at wage-labor prices. Evidently a desire to relieve the sick rather than to make money was the prime motive power that moved him in the matter; though not many saw, nor perhaps cared to see, the motive.

With few exceptions the people saw in him a simple fellow who peddled a worthless nostrum about the country because he was too lazy to work for a living, or because no one would trust him with any work to do; which latter supposition may have been an aid to him in selling his medicine. For if it was true that few would employ him, he must—if he would continue to exist—obtain that upon which to live in some other way than by hiring himself out as a laborer; and having faith in his remedy he naturally fell back upon it as a means of doing good to his fellows and at the same time obtaining food to satisfy the cravings of his hunger.

Commonly, he was regarded as a fit butt for any jokes by which the "smart Alecks" of the community sought to exhibit the superiority of their wits; and he had been guyed unmercifully at different times by the boys of the little city. But here and there he had met

a finer nature or a more loving one, and there were a few houses in the country and at least one place in the town where he felt certain of kindly and considerate treatment. And this latter place was the office of our legal friend to whom we have already introduced the reader.

On several previous occasions for a single night, and now for three successive nights, Doctor had slept upon the sofa in the attorney's office, being pressed to do so by that gentleman, who saw by his manner rather than by any words he uttered that something weighed upon his mind and caused him to be more than usually ill at ease.

Perhaps the attorney imagined that lack of success in selling his medical decoctions in the country had driven him into town; and that here the boys had renewed their oft repeated game of guying until they had driven their victim into a condition of overwrought nervousness, and so had felt prompted to offer his own respectful consideration as a palliative.

He was fully capable of doing an act of this kind. As I have said before, he was of a sympathetic nature and responded quickly to appeals to his feelings; and when "Doctor" three days before had entered his office with a manner even more deprecatory than usual, and, even though kindly received and some effort made to entertain him, had appeared to grow less rather than more at his ease, his entertainer had still farther shown his goodness of heart. Excusing himself on plea of an engagement at a brother attorney's office, he had insisted on Doctor remaining in possession of the place during his absence, and sleeping upon his sofa at night—a courtesy repeated again and again on the following days, and accepted each time with evidently

grateful feelings, but a very confused expression of them.

Had our friend understood Doctor's purpose in calling upon him at this time, or the reason which had induced him to accept his hospitality, he would possibly have entertained quite different feelings toward him.

Not that he could have lost sympathy for him, he was too generous by nature for that; but had he known what Doctor knew—that his own name was being canvassed among the reform organizations of the district as a possible candidate upon their ticket for congress at the coming election, and that Doctor—who was an earnest if not an influential believer in reform—had come for the purpose of seeking to satisfy himself whether or not he would accept the trust if conferred upon him—had he known this, he might have felt annoyed at what most men would have regarded as the impudence of this fellow, this half-witted vender of nostrums, in thus daring, in a sense, to sit in judgment on him; but it is much more likely that his easily sympathetic and unantagonistic nature would have led him to take a humorous view of the situation, and that while he would not have pressed Doctor to prolong his stay, he would secretly have considered his coming for such a purpose as an exceedingly good joke.

As it was, he treated him with a kind of respectful deference, such as he felt would most readily heal the wounds made by the rudeness of others upon his too sensitive nature; and it was with a feeling that Doctor appreciated his courtesy and would be grateful for opportunity to do him even the smallest favor in return, quite as much as from any real need of his services, that he made the request of him with which we open this story.

We would not have the reader suppose that Doctor had passed the entire time during these three days in Swanson's office. He had, in fact, passed but a fraction of either day there, and he had steadily refused every invitation of the attorney to take a meal with him at the Eagle Hotel, where he was then boarding, although thinking he might really be in need of one, Swanson had been somewhat insistent on his doing so. To all such invitations Doctor offered the excuse of having already eaten, and as he invariably absented himself for some hours before meal times, even arising and leaving the office in the morning long before his entertainer thought of doing so, there was no gainsaying his assertion; and finally Swanson ceased to urge him, satisfied with the belief that he obtained luncheon at the bakery, and putting down his refusal to go to the hotel to that confirmed and apparently insurmountable diffidence which made it painful for him to appear among people.

At the moment of the opening of our story, Doctor was sitting in one of Swanson's office-chairs reading, or at least pretending to read, the daily paper of yesterday. As he sat, his body was bent slightly forward and drawn in, his legs drawn back and feet hidden as much as possible beneath his chair, while the paper was held in a position to screen his face from observation both by the other occupant of the room and by anyone who might chance to enter at the open door; his whole position declaring most plainly his utter absence of confidence in himself.

And yet a close observer might have detected evidences of intent and alert watchfulness, if not in the attitude, then in the promptness with which the paper was laid aside and the sitter rose to his feet as

the first words of a request to go for his letters fell from the lips of his companion.

His face brightened and lifted as the request was understood and instantly he turned to the door. But here he hesitated, lifted one foot as if to begin the descent of the three steps which led to the ground and the street, withdrew it again, and turning half about yet without looking at his companion, he said, with a deprecating air:

"The boys are all down that way."

Swanson answered kindly and encouragingly.

"Oh, well," he said, "we mustn't mind the boys' guying too much. They don't really mean any harm. They are so full of animal spirits they cannot behave themselves like human beings, and they do not realize how we older folks see things. They will be older and have more sense some day, and I wouldn't pay any attention to their coltishness if I were you."

Again Doctor's countenance brightened and lifted, and again he turned to the door and passed down the steps into the street.

Ten minutes later he re-entered the office with an air which, while it showed plainly the pleasure it had given him to do his friend the small favor asked, could not conceal the relief he felt at having escaped being tormented by the boys.

"Here is your mail," he said. "The postmaster said both trains were in; I asked him." And then he added: "The boys never saw me at all; I went down on the other side of the street and crossed over below them, and they never once noticed me."

CHAPTER II.

In which the reader receives an intimation of the danger to the ordinary citizen involved in the accidental witnessing of a dog fight.

Although Doctor had spent portions of three days in the presence of the man he had come to interview, he had as yet found no words in which to approach the purpose of his visit. His diffidence, the bane of his existence, and the insurmountable obstacle to his success in any direction, had prevented.

Several times the coversation had appeared to take a turn favorable to his wishes, but always it had drifted off again in some other direction, because he could not summon sufficient courage to interpose a remark of the proper character at the opportune moment.

In fact, the conversation had been carried on with very little assistance from him. Swanson had talked and he had listened. He was at least a good listener, and Swanson was undoubtedly a good talker to such a listener. He had good command of language and his sympathies being aroused by the seeming barrenness of Doctor's life, in whom he saw a timid child's nature crushed beneath the burden of a man's responsibility, without companions, and quite incapable of making them among the selfish, surging world of men about him, Swanson found a mild pleasure in talking to him in a way that, for the time being, lifted him into a partially upright mental and spiritual man.

And although the response from Doctor to his effort in this direction was meagre, so far as the number of words went, yet the legally trained mind of the attorney was more than once surprised by the clearness and terseness with which Doctor gave expression to views on the different questions touched upon; and although it did not sink so deeply into his consciousness as to make him really aware of the fact, he had yet learned in these three days to regard Doctor rather less in the light of a half-witted fellow who was to be kindly treated out of pity, and more as an unfortunately constituted genius who was to be respected.

On Doctor's part there was a feeling akin to adoration for the man who treated him with such thoughtful consideration.

His first introduction to him had occurred in a justice's court, into which Docor had been brought—a very unwilling witness—by one of the parties to the suit; a trifling affair growing out of a dog fight, the beginning of which he had been so unfortunate as to witness.

Quite abashed and cast down in the presence of the court and the opposing lawyers, one of whom—filled with the idea of the importance of his profession, and encouraged by the knowledge that the commonly held opinions of courts are that witnesses have no rights and no feelings that attorneys are bound to respect—had browbeaten and bedeviled him until, had not Swanson, who was also in the case, taken the witness out of his hands and by kind and judicious questions enabled him to tell what he knew of it, it is probable he would have been so confused as to be unable to speak at all; in which case, the judge would doubtless

have protected the dignity of the court by fining him for contempt.

Under Swanson's kindly leading, however, Doctor was enabled to tell his story in a way to do justice to both parties in the suit, and to cause those to part friends who had come into court as enemies.

Doctor got little credit for his influence in shaping the result of the trial. He would have been surprised and overwhelmed with confusion if any one had so much as expressed thanks for what he had done; but his heart swelled with gratitude toward Swanson, and he ever afterward looked up to him as a friend to himself and to humanity; one to be honored above all other men whom he had ever met.

"Blessed is the peacemaker; he shall inherit the kingdom of God," was the sentiment impressed upon his heart as he went, an unwilling witness because of his great diffidence, into court. And when he found that, through his evidence brought out by Swanson's kindly questioning, peace had flowed in and taken the place of strife between two of his fellow men, he felt a great glow of happiness; and to the attorney who had so successfully drawn out what he knew on the subject, he gave all the glory and the honor, and immediately enshrined him in his heart as the greatest and noblest of men.

It had been words which Swanson had uttered in a public address too, which had started Doctor to thinking on labor reform questions. He had never thought about such things before. If the condition of the people among whom he had passed to and fro offering his nostrum for sale had ever appealed to his sympathy—and it did—he had never thought of it as resulting from causes that might be removed by the

power vested in congress and the courts, but rather as an unfortunate condition of things of which he felt himself to be a part, and which—like his own inability to contend with his fellows—was insurmountable as a whole, and only to be relieved in some faint degree by charity, as when he gave a bottle of his medicine to a sick child whose father—a day laborer, out of employment—was without the means of paying for it.

But when he heard from the lips of Swanson, whom he regarded as at once the best and wisest of men, that the evil condition which surrounded the people was in a measure at least due to unjust laws, and hence could be remedied by proper legislation, his imagination at once took wings, and in fancy he saw the burdens lifted from off the shoulders of the race, and peace and prosperity and gladness where now he knew was only strife and galling poverty and wretchedness.

Swanson had given but a dim idea of what particular legislation had brought about the evil condition of things, or of what was needed to remove it.

In point of fact, Swanson had not a very clear perception of the matter himself; but his sympathies had been aroused, and he had caught a faint glimmering of truth through the haze with which the—so called—statesmen and economists had surrounded the question of the relation of labor and capital, and had given expression to the ideas which Doctor had heard, and upon which he had builded such beautiful air castles.

Since that first time, Doctor had spent days and weeks, nay a whole year, in trying to solve the question thus raised—of the way out of these evil conditions. He had attended the open meetings of the laboring men in town, creeping in unobserved and sheltering himself in some shadowed corner, where he had sat and

listened to the speeches, and had gone away filled with bright hopes and new ideas, which latter he had carefully and laboriously conned over and over, weighing every argument for and against in the light of facts as they came under his own observation, or as he learned them to exist from the reading of such papers and books as chanced to be within his reach, until he had become possessed of a fund of knowledge on labor subjects that would have been a matter of envy to his fellows if possessed by most of the orators of the day upon either side of the contested question.

As for Swanson, he had thought very little. He had been engaged for the most part with his legal business and with his few society interests; and as he had never aspired to political honors, had given little attention to the political issues so rapidly coming to the front, and really knew little more of them than that they existed, were being discussed and that his sympathies were with the poor who had hard work to make both ends of the year meet, rather than with the rich who through trusts and combinations were absorbing the products of the toil of the masses.

He had, however, given expression to this feeling in a half-public way on several occasions; and it was these expressions that had caused the leaders of his party to look upon him with a slightly suspicious eye, and on the other hand, induced the laborers to regard him as a friend who from his position and abilities might assist them greatly if he could be induced to accept the championship of their cause.

To this condition and feeling they had been helped more than they were aware of by the quiet but persistent efforts of Doctor. Swanson's praises were ever upon his lips; or at least, his lips seldom opened in

communication with the friends of reform—and he talked now of little else—except to give expression to this new found faith in a better day coming; and always he managed—though mostly without being aware of it—to convey the impression that he gave Swanson's views and feelings rather than his own.

His faith in Swanson was so great and his loyalty to him so perfect, while his confidence in himself was so nearly nothing, that he endowed Swanson with all the knowledge and enthusiasm which he himself possessed; and these had been so great with relation to labor questions that the workingmen and farmers with whom he came in contact had gradually come to listen to him and to treat with a respectful attention assertions and ideas, believing them to originate with Swanson, which they would not have regarded with respect had they supposed them to originate with Doctor.

And so it came about that when nominations for congress began to be talked of, the eyes of the labor reformers turned with one accord toward Swanson; and the idea of making him the nominee took firm hold on them.

When it suddenly broke on Doctor's mind that the laborers would ask Swanson to be their standard bearer, a quick and almost paralyzing fear took momentary possession of him. Like a lightning flash the thought had come to him that possibly Swanson was not so fully in sympathy with the laborers as he had believed him to be; and his sensitive soul was shocked with the suggestion—"What if Swanson should refuse to become their candidate?"

For an instant he saw with some degree of clearness his own feelings and his own position and compared them with what he really knew of Swanson with rela-

tion to the question at issue; and he felt that he had perhaps misrepresented him, and so done a grievous wrong to the man he loved above all human beings, and to the laborers whose cause was dearer to him than his own life.

Then came a revulsion of feeling and he staggered beneath the thought that he had wronged the noblest of men by the suspicion that he could possibly fail to understand better than he himself could the rights and wrongs of the laborers, or that understanding, he should be unwilling to take his place at the front and bear the brunt of a contest, however hot it might be, in defense of their cause. Yet, out of it all, out of this tempestuous sea of feeling, he came with the compulsion upon him to go to Mr. Swanson and learn from his own lips, and directly, that he would indeed accept the nomination and lead the laboring men and women of the country on to peaceful and glorious victory.

And so he had come, not as a spy, not as one who distrusted the loyalty of his friend, but as one who feared, if he feared at all, that that friend's modesty and preference for others over himself might tempt him to refuse the position of leadership which this loving and devoted heart felt no other could possibly fill so perfectly.

And he had been near him for three whole days and nights and yet had not put the question he had come to ask.

But now he would delay no longer.

The feeling that he had done Swanson even the small favor of going for his mail seemed to him to bring them nearer together. Not that he counted what he had done as anything; he would have counted it very little to have lost a limb in the service of the

man whom he loved so much, whom he looked to as the Moses who was to lead the children of Israel out of bondage; but somehow he felt that in doing so trifling a thing he had proven his allegiance and so could the better speak that which he had come to speak; and now he would have spoken but even as he raised his eyes to catch the expression of his noble friend's countenance that he might judge of the impression his first words should make he saw coming down the street two of the recognized leaders of the organized laboring men of the district, and he knew that another would ask that which he was about to ask; and he turned about and seated himself in the far corner of the room, took up the paper he had laid down when he started to go for Swanson's letters, shaded his face with it and waited.

CHAPTER III.

Introducing two of the representatives of the labor organizations who come to solicit Mr. Swanson to become their candidate for congress.

"Come in, gentlemen, come in, Mr—r—Nixon!" called Swanson, as the two men whom Doctor had seen coming up the street appeared at the door and hesitated an instant before entering.

Swanson did not rise from his chair, as he might have done had his callers worn dress suits and silk hats, instead of plain business suits of an inexpensive quality and make. Nevertheless, his manner was entirely respectful, and there was even a note of cordiality in the tones of his voice as he bid them enter. In fact, there nearly always was an undertone of cordiality in Mr. Swanson's voice, no matter whom he addressed or where. He was a good fellow himself. He liked people as a general thing, and his voice and manner expressed it without effort on his part; he was naturally and unaffectedly cordial with men.

He stumbled a little over Mr. Nixon's name when inviting him in. He remembered the man well, though he had little actual knowledge of him; had not seen him for months, and could not on the instant of his approach to the office door recall the name to memory; yet not wishing to appear to have forgotten him, he made the effort and succeeded in speaking it, though a trifle haltingly.

He did not—as I have remarked—rise to his feet as the men entered, but he laid aside the complaint which he had just completed for his client Barnes, wheeled his chair about so as to face the door and those who were entering, and by his general manner showed that his callers were welcome, and that he was ready to hear what might be the object of their visit whenever they chose to make it known.

Of the two men who now entered the one addressed as Nixon advanced with a firm step, pushing his hat back from his forehead as he did so, but without removing it, and offered Swanson his hand with a genial friendliness that evidently rather surprised that gentleman. He, however, grasped it promptly and rose to his feet still holding it. In fact, he could hardly have dropped it if he had desired; for Nixon held it in a firm grasp, shaking it heartily, and only released it when Swanson was fully and squarely upon his feet; then he did so, saying at the same time:

"I don't suppose you know much about me, Mr. Swanson, but I know you, and I once boarded for a week at Mrs. Pepsin's when you were there. I am president of the United Labor Organizations of the district; and this is Mr. Peters, who is secretary."

He paused here to give the men thus introduced an opportunity to shake hands; after which he continued, still standing where he was, though Swanson had politely indicated that they should be seated:

"We have come, Mr. Swanson, to ask you if you will accept of a nomination to congress from the labor men. We have not held our convention yet, but we are going to do so soon, and if you will accept the nomination the boys will all go for you in the convention and do what they can to elect you afterward.

We know you are not exactly a laboring man yourself, but we have heard how you are in sympathy with us and think as we do about things, and we want you to make the fight for us; and we think maybe, as you are so well known and liked, that you can be elected; and if you are, you can do a great deal of good for the people that work hard and live poor."

"Yes," interrupted Peters, "you can do a mighty sight of good for us and for yourself, too. We are bound to win sooner or later, and when we do, the fellows that have stood by us will be the fellows that will run things, and them that's been against us can sit on the back seats and suck their thumbs."

While the two men, first Nixon and then Peters were speaking, the face of our legal friend underwent a variety of changes. At first surprise showed itself; then the faintest indication of a suspicion that he was being made game of; then, as the evident earnestness of Nixon compelled him to dismiss this thought as quickly as it came, he had a feeling that there was something ludicrous in the idea of his being the candidate of the laboring men for congress; he who had never done a stroke of physical work in his life, and really knew nothing about the wants of the laboring people. Neither was it as a candidate of the laboring men exclusively that the matter appeared to him as peculiar, but of himself as a candidate at all, and for congress. In all his castle building, in all his flights of fancy, he had never once pictured himself as a member of congress, and now that it was suggested to him in what was undoubtedly dead earnest by others, the one central idea of himself occupying a seat in congress crowded out all secondary ones, and the smile which for an instant threatened to break over

his face was not altogether at the apparent anomaly which he presented to himself as the laboring men's candidate for congress, but himself as such candidate without relation to anything or anybody else. Following this with equal rapidity came a natural and justifiable feeling of prideful pleasure at the honor done him; and when Nixon, still standing before him, had ceased speaking, he instinctively raised his hand to grasp that of the speaker, but dropped it again as Peters struck in; and when the latter had finished, instead of offering to shake hands with either of the men, he waved them to seats with a manner in which a trifle of dignity was mingled with an evident effort to be courteous. Then he resumed his own seat.

For an instant after all were seated there was silence; and then Swanson said, a little stammeringly:

"Really, gentlemen, I hardly know how to answer you. Your proposition is entirely unexpected. I have never thought of the possibility of such a thing, and had not the faintest suspicion that you, that the laboring men, contemplated asking me to be their candidate. In fact, I did not know they had decided to put up a candidate, but supposed they would try to get the legislation they want by making their demands through whoever should be elected by the Democrats or Republicans."

"That's what we have decided on, making a nomination independent of both parties," replied Nixon. "We have tried 'em both and they have promised and promised, but they never do anything. The laboring people are growing poorer every year, and times are getting harder, and wages lower, and work scarcer, and we don't see how we can stand it much longer; so

we concluded to put up a man of our own and see if he can do anything for us."

"But can you elect a man if you put him up?" asked Swanson.

"That's what we are not so sure of as we would like to be; but we think—" began Nixon, when Peters interrupted him.

"Of course we can elect him if we work it right, and we will; the laboring men will all vote for him, and they are almost a majority of themselves. And then there are your own personal friends; and beside, a good many of your own party will come to you when they see that you are being backed by the solid labor vote. Oh, you needn't fear, Mr. Swanson; you will be elected sure if you accept our nomination and follow our advice."

There was something in the tone of Peters' voice, in his manner, in his personality perhaps, which caused Swanson to experience a slight feeling of repulsion toward him when he spoke. He had felt this before when Peters had addressed him, and had instinctively dropped the hand he was on the point of offering both to Nixon and to him. He had the same feeling now, though he did not stop to analyze it, either at this or any future time. He had not yet analyzed his own desire even, with relation to these men and the proposition they made, and he did not feel certain as to what answer he wished to give. He knew very little about the situation politically, and knew that he did not. Had he been asked on the day previous how the vote of the district would divide in the next election he would have made an approximate statement on the vote polled for the state ticket the year before, and divided the vote between the Democratic and Repub-

lican parties without a thought of any of it going to the labor men; but now he saw things differently.

It is hard for a man to believe his opinions and views are esteemed so lightly, that he himself is of so little weight that he cannot draw a single vote from out the ranks of his political party through his own personal popularity and superior wisdom. Yet such is the case with scarcely an exception in the history of the politics of the country. Men will follow their party wherever it leads; follow it through war to poverty and through poverty to serfdom, and will refuse to follow a former party leader who breaks away from it a single foot, no matter how eloquently he pleads or how wisely he points the way.

But of this remarkable characteristic of men, Mr. Swanson was ignorant. He had no experience in practical politics; he felt a pleasant sense of his growing importance in the community and was unable at the moment to properly estimate the influence upon the canvass which his entrance into it as a candidate of the labor organization might have, and he still hesitated over what reply he should make to its representatives.

"When do you hold your convention?" he asked, after a moment of silence all around.

"Two weeks from to-day is the time decided on," replied Nixon, "and I sincerely hope, Mr. Swanson, that you will consent to make the race. We will do our very best to give you a good vote, and in any event it need not cost you much, and your advocacy of our cause will help us greatly, as you will be listened to where we will not be."

"Yes, and I tell you you can be elected," again broke in Peters. "The working men will vote for you

solid if we tell them to, and if the thing is managed right, enough more votes can be got from one of the old parties to elect you easy. You had better accept at once, Mr. Swanson, and let us go to work to get things in shape for your nomination."

A first glance at the two men, the representatives of the workingman's party, who sat side by side fronting Mr. Swanson, would disclose no very marked difference between them. Both were dressed in dark suits of no noticeable pattern, and of such fit as is usually obtained in ready-made clothing. Both wore white shirts and dark neckties with some little ornament in the shape of a pin through them, and both now held black slouch hats in their hands, and the shoes of each showed that they had received attention from the blacking-brush before the wearers of them left their respective homes.

In a word, both men were dressed in the garb commonly worn by mechanics and the better paid laboring men on Sundays and whenever they are off duty.

Both men, too, were of medium height, both light complexioned, and both showed in their manner and general make-up that they were mechanics of some kind and accustomed to labor for their daily bread.

But here the resemblance ended; and a closer examination disclosed decided differences of character. Nixon's countenance wore an expression at once frank and open; but his mouth and chin indicated strength and decision of character, and there was a look in his clear gray eyes that hinted of danger to be met in attempting to impose upon their possessor. His hands were shapely in spite of the evidence upon them of his trade as a worker in iron; his fingers were long and somewhat tapering; the nails were not long, neither were they stubbed off even with the flesh, and

they were clean; it was the hand of construction, and evidently of one with the high instincts of a gentleman.

Peters' hands were short and stubby, and made to appear still more so by having the nails pared down as close to the flesh as it was possible to cut them without starting the blood. He was a worker in wood, and was employed in one of the large manufactories of agricultural implements in town, and in one of the cleanest of its departments; yet his hands looked much more grimy than did those of his companion, who worked in iron. His chin was quite as prominent as it should be, but it lacked the element of character, and his nose was too small to correspond with it. His eyes were gray, like his companion's, but they had a different expression.

It was hard to tell just what expression Peter's eyes did have, but it was not one that inspired any particular confidence in their possessor.

Both men were single, and had obtained their positions as leaders in the labor organization by their persistent efforts to organize their fellow workers into Labor Unions, Protective Societies and the like. They had never been intimate, nor closely associated in this work until recently, when a kind of Central Union composed of delegates from the various labor organizations of the district had been formed, by which they had been elected respectively president and secretary, and thus thrown into close if not entirely harmonious relations.

I say, not entirely harmonious relations, because it had been evident from the first that Peters coveted the position of president of the body, and was inclined to feel himself aggrieved and ill treated that it had been given to Nixon instead. He had, however,

expressed himself as entirely satisfied with the position of secretary; and when it was voted that all correspondence should pass through his hands, and that he should receive a small compensation for the labor which must fall upon him, he was probably better pleased than if his position and that of Mr. Nixon had been reversed.

Evidently the two men were not and never could be chums; and, perhaps unconsciously, they were a bit watchful of each other's words and actions, as if each sought to divine clearly the motives which governed the other.

As the two sat now, side by side, awaiting Mr. Swanson's reply to their proposition, the attitude of both that of expectancy and hope, there was yet a difference in their expression which clearly indicated the difference of character between them.

Nixon had the poise of body and general air of self-respect indicative of a man who had taken a position advisedly and after deep reflection, and which he knew to be wholly right and honorable, and from which no temporary defeat could move him. Peters showed he was eager rather than strong, and that the source of his inspiration was less high than that of his companion.

"I think, gentlemen," at last spoke Mr. Swanson, "that I must take a little time to consider your proposition; it is certainly a very unexpected one to me, and I ought not to act upon it hastily. I might wrong you in doing so," he added after a moment's pause.

"How long do you want to consider it?" asked one of the men.

"Oh, a few days; a week, say: that will be soon

enough, won't it? I ought to consult some of my friends before I decide."

"If you cannot determine sooner we must wait, I suppose," replied Nixon, "but we should have liked to take back word to the men that you would certainly accept."

"Oh, Mr. Swanson will accept," put in Peters. "You will see it is to your interest to do so when you think it over. You will have the solid labor vote—Nixon and I will see to that, and you will be elected. I will see you again in a day or two and we will talk it all over."

The two labor representatives shook hands in turn with the man they had asked to be their candidate, and turning, left the office.

When they were fairly in the street there was a slight rustling of paper in the far corner of the room, and Doctor emerged from behind the sheet he had been pretending to read throughout the interview just closed. He laid the paper upon the chair from which he had risen and came toward that into which Mr. Swanson had just sunk beside his desk, and there was a look of mingled admiration and appeal upon his face as he said with an air of animation and eagerness not common to him:

"You'll accept the nomination, won't you, Mr. Swanson? I told the men you were with them and could help them more than anybody, and they will be discouraged if you refuse."

Before Swanson could reply, Mr. Barnes entered the office and asked if the complaint that was to be the basis of his suit against a neighbor for trespass was completed, and ready to sign.

Being told that it was, he seated himself at the

table beside the attorney, signed the document, and then entered into conversation with him as his legal adviser regarding the points of evidence to be brought out when the trial should come off.

When the two gentlemen arose from their conference, they were the only persons in the room. Doctor had quietly withdrawn, and Swanson did not see him again for several days.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr Swanson suddenly becomes conscious of the existence of the social washout. He searches for material for a bridge over which he may pass to a seat in congress. Mr. Peters comes to his assistance with a suggestion.

When our legal friend found himself alone after the departure of Nixon and Peters, he sat for some moments silently thinking, and then rose and began pacing the floor of his office. After a few turns back and forth, he passed into his bed chamber in the rear of the office, closed the door between the two rooms and threw himself across the bed with his feet resting on a chair.

He remained in this position but a minute, however, when he arose and began to walk the floor, from the bed to the door, and back again to the bed, then to the door again, whirling upon his heel at either limit to his farther progress with a nervous rapidity which told plainly he was in a state of unusual excitement, and quite unable to determine what to expect of the future, or what the effect of the proposition to which he had just listened would have upon his life in the years that were to come.

As the reader is already aware, he had never been especially ambitious; had never sought for political preferment; had never thought of himself as a man possessed of the qualities of leadership and was con-

tent, and would forever have remained content, with his position of recognized equality with the most popular of his brothers at the bar where he practiced—a position to be won and held by a person of good natural abilities without excessive labor and study—and with the social position his genial disposition added to his standing in the legal profession gave him without any additional effort.

But here now was a suggestion and an indication, nay, an assurance, as it seemed to him, that he had misjudged his own abilities; that he had placed too low an estimate upon his own talents; that he possessed elements of leadership which, unknown to himself, had yet been perceived by others, and had incited the rising of a tide which, if taken at the flood, might bear him on to—who could tell what glorious future?

Once the bars of his imagination let down there rushed in a flock of pleasant fancies all garmented in white, and garlanded with roses; and these gathered about him and danced before his eyes, and sang songs into his ears, and seemed to lift him up and out of himself until he felt changed from the plain Horace Swanson whose shingle with "Attorney at Law" was tacked over his office door, and whom all his acquaintances felt at liberty to address in a manner more or less familiar, into a being with superior presence and power—one in whose hands were the destinies of many people and at whose disposal lay patronage and place almost without limit.

He had found it not hard to win and hold a position of equality at the local bar with the best who practiced there; doubtless it would be equally easy for him to take a similar position among members of congress;

nay, was there not good reason to believe that he was intellectually the superior of most men holding seats in that body? He remembered that nominations for congress were eagerly sought, and that few obtained them except through much pulling of wires and the expenditure of large sums of money; while here he was offered a nomination off-hand and without the least seeking on his part; offered it by the people themselves, who surely must have perceived in him some qualities of leadership, some latent talent for statesmanship not possessed by the average congressman, since such had to struggle and sweat and maneuver for the chance that had come to him unsolicited.

Thus did fancy lift him on her tinseled wings and bear him aloft and show him pictures beautiful as a maiden's dream of love, to drop him, when the flight was ended, through the fathomless ether of his own imagination, and leave him as stranded and wingless and almost as disconsolate as the maiden whose lover has deserted her for another.

"We are not so sure about that as we would like to be."

These words of Nixon in reply to his own question as to the ability of the laborers to elect their candidate suddenly floated in upon Swanson's beautiful dream and incontinently knocked every particle of bright color out of it.

He saw that he had made a fool of himself; at least that is the way he expressed it to himself at the first moment of alighting after his flight into the clouds on the wings of fancy; and for the next few minutes his spirits sank to a depth corresponding in some degree to their previous flight upward.

In the latter condition he saw himself the laughing

stock of his cronies at the bar, and of the leaders of the party with which he had acted in the past, and even with the merchants and business men of the town, almost all of whom he knew had spoken in condemnation of the proclaimed objects of the labor organization. So long as he was not identified with these organizations in any way, or with their members, he had felt no hesitation in expressing his sympathy with them. He really felt they had some reason for complaining. He knew, of course, they were not regarded by the elite of society as respectable in the same sense as are the members of the professions and the possessors of great wealth; and that some of their demands had been denounced as smacking of communism and hence dangerous to society; but he had paid little heed to these charges, regarding them rather as missiles hurled by the easily frightened conservatives in church and politics—those who fear innovation of ideas because ideas disturb the settled condition of things and make it unpleasant for all who are content in such positions as they find themselves, and to which they have so adapted themselves mentally and physically that any change causes them great discomfort if not actual pain—than as true statements of what the laborers really sought for or demanded.

At the safe distance of his position as an attorney-at-law, and a recognized member of the best society of the town, he had felt it entirely safe to say a word now and then as a generous impulse prompted, in defence of his less fortunate fellows, the laboring men, on the other side of the social washout.

He had never said this before, never thought it, because he had acted wholly upon impulse as his sympathies had dictated, and had never considered

the matter at all. But now that he was brought face to face with a proposition to cross over and array himself with those on the other side, to act with them in matters of the gravest moment and in a manner which would certainly not meet the approval of the majority, if indeed of a single one of his friends and associates on this side, he perceived very clearly not only that the washout was there but that he had a very great repugnance to crossing it.

He even felt a momentary flash of anger and resentment at those who had invited him to cross; who had really tempted him to do so with the bait of a nomination which he now saw could never become an election; and, had the representatives of the labor organization been present at the moment, they would undoubtedly have been given their answer in a point blank refusal to become their candidate.

But the dream of a seat in congress having once come to him was not to pass away so speedily. It had suddenly become something to be desired, coveted, worked for.

Now that he was able to judge of the situation calmly and critically, he saw that the laboring men, poor and poorly organized, accustomed to depend upon their party leaders for their political opinions and quite unaccustomed to act independently of them, offered but a frail basis on which to rest hopes of political preferment.

He knew too—though the knowledge had not impressed him so strongly before—that the larger employers of labor, like the great farm implement manufactory and the rolling mills located in his own town, were in the habit of indicating to their employees how they wished them to vote, and of enforcing their

wishes by quietly discharging, after election, such as had failed to comply.

This fact had been made known to him by one of the local politicians of the town, previous to the last county election; and as the statement had been accompanied with an estimate of the vote in the precinct at which the employees of one of the large factories voted, and as the estimate, although totally different from what would naturally follow a free expression of opinion from that number of voters, had proven to be an extremely accurate summary of the votes as they were cast and counted, he felt constrained to believe that his informant knew what he was talking about when he told him that it was customary for employers of large bodies of laboring men to regard their votes as a part of the commodity paid for by their weekly wage, and to insist on their being cast in what they—the employers—considered their own interests. How then, could he expect the votes of the laboring men to be given him if he became the champion of ideas and measures that their employers would not approve of?

He saw very clearly that he could not expect it. That neither himself nor any other man could be elected by the laboring men in their present financial condition, and with their yet imperfect organization.

Still he could not bring himself to dismiss entirely the thought of going to congress.

The thought, the wish, had fastened itself upon him, and would not be shaken off; and he speedily found his wits darting off, first in this and then in that direction, seeking for material to build a bridge over which he might cross to the object of his desire.

Could not the employers of labor be brought to an understanding of the situation? Would they be so

much opposed to himself as to refuse to permit their men to vote for him if they desired? Could he not talk with them personally and by assuring them that he was not a communist, and had no sympathy with any who sought to destroy society, and also by proving to them that he was a friend to capital as well as labor and only sought to assist them to harmonious relationship, could he not thus induce them to give him their personal support and countenance, so enabling the laboring men to vote as they wished and at the same time making certain of its being solid for him?

Or if this could not be—and he felt that much as it ought to be, it was not certain that it could be accomplished—could not the laborers be sufficiently organized and drilled to turn the tables on their employers and refuse in a body to work for them longer if they did not support the labor candidate?

That such an idea as this of the laborer compelling the employer to vote in their interest should have been presented to Swanson's mind shows how wild was becoming the flight of his wits in their effort to bring material for his bridge.

He was not so far gone, however, as not to reject as absurd and ridiculous the suggestion thus brought him. He rejected it instantly, and as quickly as it came; but the effort to do so, and to do so upon grounds satisfactory to his logical mind withdrew all sensation and all motion from his body and caused him to stop, with the suddenness almost of a jerk, his pacing back and forth, and to stand for a moment with every muscle in the exact position it occupied when the thought was introduced into his brain.

It took but an instant for his trained mind to reject the idea thrust upon him; and as abruptly as he had

paused so he resumed his occupation of walking back and forth again.

But the chain of his thought was broken. His wandering fancy returned and refused to go out any more in search of farther material for the bridge; and Swanson—suddenly recalled to himself—perceived that it was already dark in his room; that the sun was out of sight behind the hills, and that his supper hour was long since passed.

He drew a deep breath, as of one who had toiled up a long and steep hill, took up his hat and turned to leave the room and the building.

Inserting the key in the lock of the office door, he hesitated and felt more than half inclined not to go for supper at all.

"I am not hungry," he said; "I believe I'll not go."

Then he changed his mind. "I'll feel better for a cup of tea, anyway," he muttered, "and maybe it will help me to see the head and tail of this thing in some sensible kind of a light."

He locked the door, and turning, walked toward his hotel. A few blocks away, and in a locality somewhat unfrequented at that hour, Peters suddenly came out of a doorway and met him.

"Good evening, Mr. Swanson," he said. "I would like to talk with you about what we went to see you for to-day. I've got a scheme that will elect you sure, if you will go into it. Nothing wrong or unfair about it, but just good political sense; you'll say so when you hear it."

Swanson hesitated an instant, then said:

"Come to my office in an hour; I'll be back by that time." And he passed on.

An hour later he was sitting opposite Mr. Peters at

a small table in his own bedroom. The blinds were drawn, and Peters was disclosing his plan.

Later still a ten-dollar bill was transferred from Swanson's pocketbook to that of Mr. Peters; and then the latter rose and took his departure.

The plan had appeared to Swanson to be at least worth trying.

CHAPTER V.

How the proposed action of the laboring men became noised abroad, and how the different elements in society viewed it. Mr. Peters has an interview with Mr. Hardiman, who is a large mauufacturer, and forgets his iutention of forming the acquaintance of the young lady who is Mr. Hardiman's secretary.

The fact that the working men of the district would make an independent nomination for Congress, and that the nomination would probably be tendered to Horace Swanson, became noised about, and various were the comments made upon it.

Some, whose standing in society and in the church was high, denounced it as the work of socialists and anarchists, who, they declared, were seeking to destroy all government and all order, and who should be regarded as wild animals to be shot down at sight, or gotten rid of in the easiest and most expeditious manner possible.

Others thought it due to the dissatisfaction of the workers over their failure to get any of their men upon the ticket of either party at the last local election. Others said the movement was due to the action of the last Congress, which had made a change in the tariff laws that had affected the laboring people adversely, and that they now proposed to send a man there especially to represent their views upon this all-important issue.

The temperance folk thought it was what society had to expect from men whom it permitted to be constantly exposed to the temptation of indulging in intoxicating liquors, and who—they asserted—spent their idle hours in saloons, where their associations were of the worst character imaginable, and from whence nothing but evil could possibly spring.

The clergy agreed that the whole matter, beginning with and including the discontent of the laborers with their condition, could only be accounted for by the fact that they had almost universally withdrawn themselves from the influence of the church; and one of their number preached a sermon upon "The Church and its duties to the working classes" in which, without directly mentioning local affairs, he drew a frightful picture of the danger to society from the power of the ballot when wielded by ignorant and irreligious men; a danger already beginning to make itself manifest in the land even to the dullest intellect, and from which, he asserted, the wisest men of the nation had been able to suggest but two roads for escape. The one was "a change to a stronger form of government, which neither he nor any other devoted lover of the Republic founded by our patriot fathers a century ago would approve or consent to, except as a *dernier ressort*—a means of saving the spirit of the Republic when foreign-born vandals, and ignorant dupes of such, should have made any other remedy impossible, and when a failure to accept this last resource should become treason to humanity and to God."

The other was to a property qualification for voters, placed sufficiently high to prevent the ignorant and vicious from exercising any influence in elections. These—the eloquent clergyman repeated—"were to be

regarded as last resorts; possible last fortifications to be taken and held when all things else failed. But for the present the duty of the church and of society was plain; it was to go down among the ignorant, misguided people and by telling them of the wondrous love of Him who died for them on the cross and of how great is the reward in heaven of those who, like Him, bear their burdens humbly, and seek in all things to glorify God, regarding wealth and honor as nothing compared to the riches awaiting them in that future life, thus bring them into the church and so throw about them the influence which alone can redeem them from their present evil desires."

"If the church would do this," he declared, "if it would go to these discontented people throughout the length and breadth of the land and draw them into the church and into the Sunday-schools, where they would be surrounded by the proper moral influences and taught to regard their neighbor's rights as sacred as their own, then indeed would society be safe, and then, oh, joyous thought! then might those who had taken part, look to hear from the Master's lips the gracious words: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord!' "

"The way to purify society," he continued, "is to purify the individual members of it; to get them into the church and surround them with the holy atmosphere of the religion of Jesus Christ, who was himself a carpenter, and poor, yea poorer than the poorest among you; for do you not remember how he said: 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head'? Surely, O, my brethren, if we go to these men, these ignorant men who would destroy society

because of some real or fancied wrongs growing out of causes that they cannot fathom or understand, surely if we go to them in the name of the Carpenter of Nazareth they will listen and will be controlled and guided, and society will be saved, and the church upbuilded and the Most High glorified."

But the class that talked most and loudest was the small politicians. Upon the one side they said it was a trick of the opposition, and an attempt to steal votes from them; that the laboring men of the district had mostly voted with them in the past, and this was an effort to steer them into the other party by a roundabout road.

And those of the opposition party said it was a trick of the other fellows to beat them. That, seeing they were losing ground with the voters, and fearing they might not be able to carry the district and re-elect their man by fair means, they had put up a job with the labor leaders, and had hired Swanson to accept the labor nomination, hoping that he would draw enough from among his former political associates and the circle of his personal friends to defeat them and leave the present occupant of the seat still in Congress. And they were ready to declare that Swanson was a traitor and ought to be tarred and feathered; only, that not having been given their cue by their party bosses, they were not sure any more than were those who said the other thing that they knew what they were talking about.

For, as I have said, the politicians who were the first to speak up, as the rumor of the possible nomination of Swanson spread, were the little fellows; the ward politicians; the hangers-on; those who follow, but who are always anxious to appear to lead. They

were the men who, in this as in all similar cases, were eager to exhibit their political acumen, and first to explain to a public more or less desirous of knowing, the inward meaning of all movements upon the political chess-board.

The true leaders, the really brainy men, those who dictate the movements of their respective parties, said very little at first, and what they did say conveyed but scant information; nor did it even indicate the true direction of their thoughts. They were not yet certain what effect the movement among the laboring men would have upon their respective parties, and they did not therefore know whether they wished the nomination to be made or not.

The decision of the working men had been rather sudden and unexpected; and neither the Democratic nor Republican leaders knew whether a loss or a gain to their respective candidates would result from it; hence, they were silent as not knowing what direction to give to the public sentiment that was theirs to control.

But if silent, they were not idle. Before three days had passed every leader or man of prominence among the laboring men had been approached by men from either party who sought by careful questioning to learn the real incentive and probable strength of the movement, that they might profit by such knowledge as was to be gained.

Both Nixon and Peters were repeatedly interviewed; sometimes openly by known party leaders, sometimes secretly by laboring men—not members of any organization—who came ostensibly to talk about joining, but, in reality, sent by their employers or political bosses, with instructions to learn anything they could about the progress the movement was making among them,

and about the leaders personally, and to report the same to those who sent them.

Peters was in his element, and happy. To have men coming to him for information about political matters seemed to him to elevate him at once into a person of recognized ability and power. He already saw himself, in prospective, occupying positions of influence and authority as the acknowledged spokesman and leader of the labor forces of the country; and as such, dictating terms to the bosses of both the great political organizations. His replies to his interviewers were such as he fancied were best calculated to impress each with his own importance, and were varied to suit the standing and influence of the questioner. To those whom he recognized as citizens without political influence, he assumed a rather mysterious air, as of one who could but would not impart valuable information. To those whom he recognized as persons of influence he was boastful of the strength that the laborers could exhibit at the polls; claiming them to be perfectly organized throughout the district and the state, and firm in their determination to stand by the man they should nominate, though refusing to say positively who that would be.

I think there were moments about this time when Peters conceived the possibility of himself being the candidate, so puffed up was he by his suddenly acquired prominence.

Nixon was much more quiet in his talk, and in the end much less frequently interviewed. Men who go to interview another, want that other to talk. If a reporter, he wishes him to talk for publication; if a politician who seeks information for any reason, he wishes him to talk that he may judge from his manner

and from the way he approaches the subject or avoids it, quite as much as from what he actually says, what his plans are, and what are the purposes and expectations of those whom he represents. And when it was learned that Nixon was close mouthed, and would say little beyond the fact that the laboring men were organized and had determined to nominate a candidate of their own for Congress, he was left pretty much to himself; while those who sought farther news, hunted up Peters, whom it was understood had himself intimated that he was the one to apply to for information, as all correspondence passed through his hands; and that Nixon was only a kind of figure-head at best, without much influence, and would be superseded at the next election by an abler man. Even the laboring men themselves who had formerly regarded Nixon as the better man of the two began to flock about and consult Peters rather than him. This was due in part to seeing the petty politicians consulting him, and partly because they desired to have their courage kept up—something which Peters' boastful manners and words went far toward doing. Thus, Peters was strengthened in his position as leader by both sides, and was not without some excuse for the feeling of growing importance that was taking posession of him.

Beside, Peters really had a plan in his head; the one suggested to Swanson in the conference on the night following the visit of both Nixon and Peters to Swanson's office as the delegates of the labor organization, and the one approved by that gentleman, as was signified by the passage of the ten-dollar bill from his pocket to that of Peters;' Peters having represented that the carrying out of the plan agreed on would necessitate the loss of a good deal of time on his part,

and the expenditure of some little money which he himself did not possess.

It was on Wednesday that the conference between Mr. Swanson and the labor representatives was first held. On Saturday, when the employes at the factory where Peters worked, went to the office of the company to draw their pay, the functionary who presided, as he handed Peters the little roll of bills due him, said quietly and without looking up or attracting the attention of those who were in the line behind him:

"The proprietor wishes to see you; please step into the private office; you will find him there."

Filled with alternate fear that he was about to be discharged for the part he was taking in the labor movement, and of hope that he was going to receive some new assurance of his importance as a leader, he stepped out of line, passed around to the office door and entered. Seeing no one but a young lady at the far side of the room, busily employed at a desk, he hesitated a moment and then coughed slightly to attract her attention with the purpose of asking where he should find Mr. Hardiman.

At the sound which indicated the presence of some one in the room, the young lady raised her eyes, and anticipating Peters' question, pointed to a door over which he read "Private office," said simply:

"You will find Mr. Hardiman in there."

Then dropped her eyes again upon her work and took no farther notice of him.

"Mighty pretty girl the old man's got for secretary; wonder who she is," mutely commented Peters; "blamed if I don't get acquainted with her."

And he would have made an effort to prolong the conversation a moment more but that she kept her eyes

fastened on her work, and gave him no opportunity except by a direct and uncalled for interruption for which he could think of no excuse; so, abandoning the idea, but with a mental declaration of determination to speak to her at some future time, he approached the door marked "Private," and gave a rather timid knock.

Being bidden to enter, he did so, and found himself in the presence of Mr. Hardiman, head of the firm by which he was employed; but to whom he had never spoken in his life, though he had worked in this same factory for nearly two years.

As Peters entered and came forward in a slightly hesitating way, the other gave him a glance that took him in from head to foot and seemed to size him up and weigh him, Peters thought; and he did not feel particularly well satisfied with what those mental scales seemed to declare his weight to be. Although he someway felt compelled to acknowledge to himself that he had been correctly weighed, yet he met this stab at his self-esteem with the unspoken assertion that others had weighed him and declared that he weighed more; a great deal more.

However he had little time for such thoughts; for after the one searching glance, his employer motioned him to a seat, saying as he did so:

"This is Mr. Peters, I believe, one of our employes, and the recognized leader of the organized working men of the district?"

This was said in a tone and with a manner, which, without making Peters exactly certain of his ground, yet caused his bosom to swell with renewed courage and hope. He believed that this man, this person of wealth and influence and standing, was about to con-

sult him; to ask his advice, possibly his assistance in some great political scheme; and he felt eager to announce himself as the recognized and only leader of the laboring men; yet was deterred from doing so by his fears, and spoke less of the truth than he would like to have done when he said:

"Yes, sir; I have worked for you, your company I mean, for going on two years; part of the time by the day and part by piece work; and I think the foreman will tell you, sir, that he has never had any fault to find with me, sir."

"And what about your being the leader of the organized workingmen of the district?"

"Well, sir; as for that, we are organized: that is, a portion of us are, and I am secretary of one of the organizations; of the central one, in fact. I suppose you don't object to your employes organizing for sick benefits and social pleasures, do you, sir?"

"But how about going into politics? I am told you are going to put up a candidate for Congress. Don't you know that that will certainly cause the defeat of the party to which I belong, and to which you and all the laboring men ought to belong, since it is the only party that looks after the laboring man's interests and protects him against competition with the pauper labor of Europe by a tariff which, by protecting the manufacturer, enables him to pay better wages to his workmen then he could do if he had to compete with the manufacturers in countries where they pay less wages?"

"That's it, exactly," replied Peters, who began to think he saw the way clear before him. "That's exactly what we are driving at. We want a man in Congress who will work for the interests of both the

manufacturer and the laborer; one who is in favor of protecting 'em. That's what we want, and we are going to nominate such a man, and we want help to elect him, and to beat the man who is there now, and who voted to reduce the tariff and so cut down our wages."

His listener showed a faint, a very faint disposition to smile at Peters' declaration of the wants of the men he professed to represent, but he suppressed it, and said:

"I am glad to see that you take so sensible a view of the situation. I have been told that you were clear-headed and capable or I should not have sent for you. Have you determined upon who is to be your candidate?"

"Not positively. That is, not so positively but that a change might be made. We have talked of Mr. Swanson; but if some other man was thought to be abler, our men might be induced to change. We have not nominated yet."

Again the idea had come to Peters that possibly he himself might be thought of as the proper person for the exalted position under consideration.

But evidently no such idea had occurred to Mr. Hardiman. He appeared to be considering for a moment, though without taking his eyes off Peters. Then he said:

"Supposing you laboring men should nominate Mr. Swanson and then the party to which I belong should endorse him, do you think your men would stick by him and help us elect him?"

"Of course they would," replied Peters; "that is, if we don't conclude to nominate some one else instead; and as to that the men will do what I say for them to

do. You don't think of any other person you would prefer to Mr. Swanson, do you?"

"Not at present," replied Mr. Hardiman. "I don't think there would be any great objection to Mr. Swanson. He is a gentleman of ability and standing and would probably be as unobjectionable as any one you could select."

"Of course," he added, "I have no authority to pledge my party to any course of action in the matter. I only sought to know what the laboring men desired, being anxious—as I always am—to aid them in every reasonable and lawful effort they may make to better their condition. The party to which I belong has always been friendly to the working classes, and will—I feel sure—consider the proposition which you make of endorsing Mr. Swanson after you have nominated him. I will perhaps have occasion to consult with you again in a few days. Meantime, if you have need of a little leisure to work up your men I will tell the foreman to keep your place for you until you wish to return to it."

"You can depend on me to have my men in shape all right," replied Peters. "They will do anything I say." And picking up his hat from the floor beside his chair, he passed out of the door of the private office and into the street, feeling that while he did not seem to stand any chance for the nomination himself, he was undoubtedly the power behind the throne that was directing things, and not doubting that he should in time be able to demand anything he wanted, and get it, too.

In his own opinion he was just about the shrewdest politician in that community, and he felt that the fact

was rapidly coming to be recognized by all the other shrewd ones.

So filled was he with these thoughts of his own importance that not until he had walked half a block in the direction of his boarding house, did he remember his recent intention of finding something to say to the pretty girl at the desk as he came back through the office.

"She had gone home, anyway," he mentally commented; "she was not in the office as I came out. No matter, I shall have plenty of chances. I reckon the old man will be wanting to see me pretty often from this on. The old fellow knows who to consult when he wants anything done; that's evident."

And he passed on down the street toward his room. He did not go there directly, however, nor for more than an hour. Instead, he stepped into first one place and then another, where he thought he would meet those who would endeavor to "pump him," as he called it. Pump him for information about the new political movement. There was nothing that Peters enjoyed so much as being "pumped." It added to his sense of dignity and power to have people question him, as if he were possessed of valuable information that no one else had a share in.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Swanson calls upon a certain young lady at which Mr. Peters feels that he has cause for grievance. Mr. Swanson asks for information and is referred to another gentleman who has already been introduced to the reader.

Tall like the mountain,
  Fair as the flowers,
Pure as the fountain,
  Sweet as the bowers,
And the far stars that shine
  Like diamonds in the mine
Tell of my lover fine—
  My handsome lover.

When the sun's last beams
  Close the dear flowers,
Tinsel the mountain streams
  Hide in the bowers
Hastens my lover sweet
  Then to kneel at my feet,
Making my life complete;
  My handsome lover.

In a little four-room cottage on one of the back streets of Smithville, a young girl was passing about without any apparent settled purpose, but rather to keep time with her thoughts which were evidently pleasant ones.

From bed-room to parlor, the latter the one carpeted room in the house, then to the porch she flitted, stopping here to arrange the curtains of soft white

muslin more artistically, there to teach a spray of the vine that clambered over the porch some new direction to wander, now humming the tune and now caroling in a low voice the simple little old-fashioned love song the reader found at the beginning of this chapter, and occasionally casting a glance down the shaded street in the direction of the main portion of the town as if expecting, but not anxious as yet, for the coming of some one. It was Sunday afternoon, and nearing the cooler hours of the day; what in the southern states would be called "the evening," although yet some hours before the sun's regular bed time; it was in fact the time at which on pleasant Sabbath afternoons young gentlemen in our smaller towns and cities begin to adjust their neckties, brush the dust from their shoes and re-arrange their scalp-locks preparatory to making calls upon some of the young ladies with such suggestions as "This is a pleasant time to take a walk under the trees, or along the banks of the creek." Just the time in the afternoon when the maidens begin to look out of their windows to see if any young gentleman is coming that way; or, to be still more accurate, forty-five minutes before said maidens expect the aforesaid young gentleman to put in an appearance at their doors.

If it had not been about that length of time before she expected some one, the young lady to whom we are about to introduce the reader would not have been peeping out to see if her expected caller was coming; at least, I do not think she would, for I have noticed that young ladies generally do their peeping in advance of the expected arrival of their lovers, which proves of course, that their action in this respect is the prompting simply of a bit of curiosity.

They just would like to know if he is on the way, that is all. They do not care particularly whether he comes or not; at least, they are in no hurry to have him arrive; a fact which they clearly demonstrate by never allowing any one to catch them peeping at the time when they really do expect him.

And so we know that this young lady was not expecting a caller; that is, not expecting him at the moment; not really expecting him for a half hour at least, for we have ourselves caught her peeping down the street to make sure he was not coming, and she would not have done that, would not even have appeared upon the porch of the cottage lest she be thought too eager for his presence, and above all would not have permitted herself to be heard caroling the foolish love song which she had picked up recently out of some old book and set to music out of her own heart, she would not have done all or any of these things if she had really expected any one yet, if she had not felt certain he would not come for a good half hour.

For this young maiden was not engaged to her expected caller; she had not plighted her love, and did not know, had not met any one yet to whom she really wished to plight it. And she was a modest maiden and would not for the world have done or said anything to lead any young man to think she had given him her affection. Yet when coming out of church that morning, Horace Swanson had, as if by accident, appeared at her side, had walked with her as far as their roads led in the same direction, and at parting, had asked permission to call upon her that afternoon, she had consented with a feeling of something—some fountain of sweets—bubbling up in her heart—of the

sudden bursting forth into song of a bird, of whose presence she had no previous knowledge. And all the way home to her father's cottage, and all the time she was preparing the frugal meal, and afterward while she cleared the table and washed the dishes, this same song-bird had twittered and sung in her heart, and its music had overflowed at her lips in such simple ditty as that which the reader has overheard.

She had dressed herself after her work in the kitchen was done, in a white dress of mull, and had wreathed her dark hair about her head in a manner at once simple and artistic. Of jewlery she had none that did not seem to be too cheap for the day and the occasion, and in lieu of a pin, she had leaned far over the porch railing and had gathered a bunch of lilac-blooms and fastened them at her throat; and very certain am I that Horace Swanson thought she needed no farther adornment as he came up the street a few minutes ahead of regulation time, and saw her pass the open door from the porch into the little parlor, quite as if she had not caught a glimpse of him the moment he emerged from behind the shrubbery which, in the far corner of the adjoining yard, hid for a space the approach of anyone coming from that direction. Nor did he seem to change his mind regarding her sweet appearance as she took one little step forward upon the porch in acknowledgement of his presence while yet he was ascending the steps, for there was a very admiring look in his eyes, and a very genial smile wreathing his lips at that moment.

And, there was yet another who saw and admired, even if he did not appreciate, the pure beauty of the girl; for there chanced to come around the corner from the side street while yet Miss Mason and Mr. Swanson exchanged

greetings, one with whom the reader is already acquainted, and will recognize, albeit he is dressed a trifle more elaborately than we have ever seen him before, and walks with an air of importance which is too newly assumed to sit easily upon him. It is Mr. Peters.

Catching sight of Swanson as that gentleman ascended the cottage steps, Peters hurried forward with the intention of calling to him. This, not that he had previously wished to see him particularly, but prompted by a natural desire to have speech with one between whom and himself there were certain confidences.

Just as he was in the breath of speaking, however, his eye caught sight of her whom Swanson was addressing, and the words he was about to utter seemed quietly and without sound to distill themselves from his open mouth, while he stood for an instant too much surprised to walk on.

Recalling himself, he moved forward with his face turned to the street, with an air which he intended to be very careless, and to indicate that he was in total ignorance of the fact that any one he knew or had ever seen before was in the cottage; but as soon as he felt himself screened from the observation of its occupant, he quickened his gait to correspond more nearly with his aroused feelings.

"I'm cursed," he muttered, "if that wasn't old Hardiman's office girl; the one I saw in his office the day I was there; prettier'n ever, too; prettiest girl in town. And Swanson's waitin' on her."

"Wish I could find someway to trip Swanson, I'd do it, too quick. It was enough to keep me out of the nomination to Congress without taking the girl too.

That's more than any gentleman ought stand, and you bet I'm a gentleman and I mean to get even with him some day; I ain't going to be trod on always."

While Peters was thus making complaint to himself, Swanson had entered the cottage at the invitation of Miss Mason, and at her insistance had seated himself in the only easy-chair in the room, and near one of the windows while she took a seat near the other window.

Usually at his ease and a good talker, Swanson felt a strange sense of embarrassment on first coming into the presence of this young girl, but soon overcame it and led off the conversation; and together the two chatted. The weather, Mr. Goodman's sermon, to which they had listened that morning, the Sunday school, which both attended, furnished them themes for a time. Then some little society events which had transpired recently, and of which the young lady, not being exactly in society, although not exactly excluded from it, felt some interest, and regarding which she expressed a desire for information formed the topics of what was to each a very pleasant conversation, although each felt there was another subject which—if it could be approached in just the right way—would be still more interesting.

Now the reader is not to jump to the conclusion, drawn from his own observation or experience, that the subject upon which these young people were anxious yet doubting how to begin talking was love or marriage; for I assert that it was not. Or if, possibly, some slight feeling of a future unity of interests between them existed at all, it was unacknowledged by either, and existed only in their pre-conscious minds, not yet having reached the conscious stage of growth.

That it did exist, and was the secret power moving them to talk of what was a matter of present personal interest to only one of them, is possible; but I say again that neither acknowledged it, or in truth knew of its existence.

Swanson had just passed through a period of changeful and tumultuous feeling. This was the second Sunday since his interview with Nixon and Peters, at which they had first asked him to permit the use of his name as the laboring men's candidate for Congress; and twenty-four hours had now scarcely elapsed since they had met in convention and tendered him the formal nomination. Every day since that first interview—not excepting the Sabbath of last week—he had been in consultation some portion of the day or night, either with the bosses of the old party, with which he had affiliated in the past, or with some representative of the labor organization, usually Peters, and had been the prey of alternate hopes and fears, of burning desire for a seat in Congress, and of loathing disgust for the means by which alone it appeared possible to obtain it.

His sense of justice had been shocked and his manhood insulted by the proposition that had come to him from the "bosses" of his own political party regarding his future action, predicated upon the possibility of his election and contingent upon his receiving the countenance and support of that party at the polls. And when in the integrity of a soul not naturally evil, and in the flush of indignant feelings at what he felt to be an insult to his honor—he would have rejected their proposition, and did turn to the laboring men for counsel and upbearing, he was met by Peters who seemed to him during these days of trial and indeci-

sion to be omnipresent, with arguments to show that he ought to sell his convictions of right to-day for the power to do good to the people in the future; or if not by Peters, then by others claiming to represent the laboring men, but whose dense ignorance of economic questions was so apparent—even to Swanson who knew that he himself understood the most simple of them but imperfectly—that his disgust at the dishonesty of the one was only equaled by his feeling of disappointment at the ignorance and weakness of the other. And between these two feelings, and with ambition pricking at him to urge him forward, he had rather stood still than moved either to retreat or advance, and had been a negative more than a positive factor in the skirmish for position; at the end of which, he found himself the nominee of the laboring men of his district and with a pledge from the bosses, a promise he knew they were certainly able to redeem if they would, to give him the endorsement of that one of the political parties which had heretofore been in a small, but only a small minority, in the district.

And he had retired to bed the night before, after learning the result of the labor convention, weary and worn; not so much of body as of soul; but having accepted mentally the existing condition of things, and ceased to protest against them, had slept soundly and risen with a feeling of renewed strength and spirit; had dressed with scrupulous care, and after breakfast, sauntered out to religious services with a feeling of good fellowship for all the world, and a desire to remain long in it and enjoy its honors, its comforts and pleasures to the fulest.

At Sunday school, he had met as on many another Sunday, the young lady with whom we left him con-

versing but a moment ago. Her sweet face and earnest yet modest deportment had always a certain attraction for him, and he had once before called on her, and had then thought to do so soon again. But she was not in his set exactly; she was too poor to dress fashionably, and too obscure to receive attentions from the leaders of society; for even Smithville had its society leaders; and so he seldom saw her except at church and Sunday school, and then did not always have opportunity to speak to her without specially seeking it, and he had ceased to think about his former intentions of again calling on her.

But this morning, while sitting in the church, his eyes had someway been drawn again and again to her face, and had rested there with a fuller appreciation of her beauty than ever before. There appeared to be something restful in her face and attitude, something strong yet sweetly gentle, something that begot confidence and held it, something that promised repose to him who should knock at the door of her heart and waken it to attend his call. Half recognizing that he saw all this in her, he became mildly conscious of his own soul weariness, and of a desire to touch and be purified by contact with the purity which he saw shining out of the maiden; and when—by what was to him as to her, mere accident—he had found himself at her side as they walked away from church at the close of the services, he had yielded to a sudden desire to ask permission to call on her that afternoon, and receiving an affirmative reply, was now seated near her in fulfillment of that request and answer.

And he wanted to talk to her of his own affairs, of his own suddenly enlarged prospects.

He even became conscious, as he sought for some

suitable way for the introduction of the subject, that he had come on purpose to talk of himself and his future.

What he did not so fully recognize was the fact that he had come hoping that in some occult way his own feelings of lowered dignity and insulted manhood would be removed in the pure presence of this pure girl, and thus have restored to him the feeling of strict rectitude which he had lost in his conflict with the temptations which had assailed him during the past week.

If he could have but this in addition to the position and honors which appeared about to fall to him he felt that he should be entirely happy. And it was this wish, this hope, that, unacknowledged to himself, had brought him to the cottage and into the presence of the maid.

And she?

What girl of eighteen who was not already in love with another, would not feel a fluttering at the heart at even so slight a mark of preference from a young man of acknowledged good looks, good moral character and splendid prospects?

And there were other reasons why this particular young lady should be pleased with the attention of this particular young gentleman.

Jennie Mason—for that is her name—is the daughter of Joseph Mason.

Now Joseph Mason was a mechanic, and at one time a builder, and pretty well to do in the world; but, being possessed of inventive genius he became interested in, and attempted to develop certain devices for the more rapid production of wealth; and although he succeeded in perfecting one of the most important of these, it was at the cost of so large a

portion of his accumulations that he was unable to put it upon the markets in a way to get returns from it and had transferred to the proprietor of one of the large factories a controlling interest in his invention, upon terms, which, while appearing advantageous at the time had proven not to be so; as, although numbers of the machines were in use, the inventor and supposed partial owner of the patent had never received a dollar of income from them during the several years since they had first been put upon the market; and when an accident had deprived him of the use of an arm, rendering him lame beside, his daughter Jennie had been forced—in order to procure the necessities of life for herself and father—to enter the employ of this very factory as secretary and correspondent.

Even the cottage was mortgaged; and in addition to supporting the family of two, Jennie's salary had to be drawn upon periodically to pay interest on the mortgage, which if foreclosed would leave them without a shelter over their heads.

Cast down and half distraught by his accumulation of misfortunes, Mr. Mason had at first made loud complaint against fate, and had been ready, in the language of Job's advisers, to curse God and die; but a better spirit had come to his relief, and instead of cursing God, he had sat diligently to work seeking for the cause—not alone of his own troubles, but of those of inventors and of producers of wealth the world over; and though not a member of any labor organization, and without great faith in any immediate good results to follow the present movement of the laborers, he yet sympathized deeply with them, and naturally had taught his daughter to do so; so that she now saw in Mr. Swanson, not simply a young man of ordinary

metal and spirit, but the man whom the poor and oppressed among the people had selected as the one ablest among all their friends and sympathizers to be their spokesman and leader.

She had heard Nixon—who occasionally spent an evening at the cottage in company with her father, equally with herself—speak well of him. And Doctor, who also sometimes called when in town, he having learned that he was certain of a kindly greeting and courteous treatment, Doctor had extolled the virtues of Mr. Swanson as often and as fully as his diffidence would admit; so that altogether it is not wonderful that the heart of the young girl was quite open to an advance, had he made it, from the young knight whose gallantry and courage were so well established; but who, instead of making love, was seeking rather for a way of introducing the subject of his own personal interests in a proper manner into the conversation.

His companion came to his relief. She too, had wanted to talk, or hear him talk, of his nomination, and of the labor cause in which she supposed he felt the same great interest she and her father felt.

She wanted, too, that he should feel that they were glad he was the man selected as the standard bearer of the labor cause, and she said:

"We know, of course, Mr. Swanson, you were nominated for Congress, yesterday, by the labor men. You will let me congratulate you, won't you? And the men, too. I want to congratulate them in having selected you, who, everybody says are so able and ready to defend their cause. Papa did not go to the convention because it is so difficult for him to get about on his crutches; but he will vote for you, and I hope you will be elected. And if you are, I know you can do a

great deal of good for the poor people by championing their cause on the floors of Congress. I'd like to be there to hear you speak."

In her eagerness to make her companion understand that they, herself and her father, were in full sympathy with what she supposed were his own motives and desires she had run on without knowing where to stop, and was now blushing sweetly at the thought of her own boldness.

"I am afraid you put too high an estimate upon me, Miss Mason," he replied; "at least, upon my abilities to serve the workingmen. I should like to do them a service, I am sure of that; but I acknowledge that I do not understand as well as I wish I did, what it is they need, or how it is to be obtained. Maybe you can help me; I assure you I shall be grateful for any assistance you can give."

This was not said banteringly or lightly. Again Mr. Swanson had come under the spell of the pure influence emanating from a pure woman of unusual intelligence and heart; and his natural love for that which is noble and good had been awakened, and he really desired to be of use to his race, and immediately to the men who had honored him with a nomination, and with whom this young and beautiful girl was so evidently in full sympathy. So his expressed desire for help from her was an honest one, though I doubt if he really expected anything of what might be considered a practical character to be offered.

Nor did she offer any. What she did say was:

"If you are really in earnest, Mr. Swanson, and want any information or assistance of that kind, I am sure Papa or Mr. Nixon can give it to you. They don't think of anything else, I guess. Any way, they never

talk of anything but how to get the people out of their trouble; and they are always studying somebody's political economy. I listen to them, and occasionally try to read, myself, but as I have all the housework to do after I come home, or before I go to the office, I can't get much time for it."

"There comes Mr. Nixon now," she added; and so ready was she to advance the cause of her espousal, and so sure that Mr. Swanson would be glad of any assistance or advice from those who were competent to give it, that she forgot to be sorry at having her conversation with him interrupted by the entrance of another.

Mr. Swanson was not so forgetful, but he was too much of a gentleman to show it.

He greeted Nixon with hearty cordiality, and received an equally cordial greeting in return. This over and a few commonplace remarks about the weather having been made and replied to, Nixon turned to the girl and said:

"Is your father in his room? With your permission, I'll walk through and see."

"Papa is not in the house," replied she. "He has gone to Mr. Brown's, on the next square, but he will be back soon, and while you are waiting for him, you can talk with Mr. Swanson about what he ought to do when he gets to Congress. He says he wants to know all about what you and Papa think ought to be done, so that he can try and do it."

Having heard her say this, Swanson himself believed that that was exactly what he did want, although he could not remember having expressed it so clearly in the conversation they were holding when Nixon came in; but as he had evidently impressed her with that idea, he knew he must have said about that.

As for Nixon, he was too modest to claim ability to instruct Mr. Swanson; but believing that he had—as Miss Mason stated—asked to be informed as to his own and her father's views, he expressed a willingness to impart them, and seating himself upon the little sofa, which occupied the side of the room opposite the windows, he began by saying:

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Swanson obtains the information asked for, at which he evinces some surprise. Afterward he is given a bouquet for his button hole and permission to escort the certain young lady to church.

"To begin, Mr. Swanson," said Nixon, "I ought to explain that we labor men are not all agreed as to what is best to be done, or rather as to what Congress must do in order to change the present condition of things and secure a more equitable distribution of wealth. The platform adopted yesterday is not exactly what some of us desired, or thought ought to have been adopted.

"I do not, of course, suppose you had anything to do with it," he continued, "but I have reason to believe that had not some of our men taken advice from those outside of our organization, and indeed, of those who consider their interest opposed to ours, the platform would have been different; and I will be frank enough to say that although it might not be fair to you who, while not one of us, have shown yourself to be in sympathy with us, yet, for myself, I would much have preferred that you should not be endorsed by one of the old parties as you now, no doubt, will be, but that we had made the race entirely independent of them, and with the idea of educating the people; getting them to understand our ideas and theories; rather than with any great hope of electing our candidate. That was

the thought I had in going to you in the first place. I thought the people would listen to you where they won't listen to us; and that by nominating you, we could get our ideas before them. Understand, I don't blame you for wishing to be elected, and I see now that we stood no chance of electing you without the aid of one or the other of the old parties. I am only saying I wish it could have been different. I understand pretty well what is going to be done, I think, and I shall vote for you and work for you, and I think you will be elected. Now as for what I think Congress ought to do: The platform adopted yesteday, declares opposition to monopolies generally, but without going into specifications as it should do. It demands a protective tariff in the interest of labor, and also favors an eight hour law, or a law making eight hours a legal day's work. Then there are a good many other things tacked on that ought not to be, because they are of little importance compared to the main issues, and most of them refer to evils which are the result of broken laws lying farther back, and which can only be removed by removing the causes, which are not even hinted at in the platform. Now I understand you will be expected to make the fight mainly on the tariff and eight hour planks especially the former, and I do not doubt that is what will elect you; but in my opinion, and, if I am not mistaken, that is what you have asked for, the proper adjustment between labor and capital will come—if it ever comes at all—through the adoption of a better financial system, and of laws which shall make the title to land depend upon use. I don't think," he went on, "that I understand the tariff question very well, though I have tried to, and have studied it a good deal. I can see, of course, that if

the raw material is just as plenty and just as cheap in Europe as it is here, and if free competition is permitted between the manufacturers of the two countries, that the American manufacturers cannot pay wages in excess of those paid by the European manufacturers plus the cost of bringing the European goods to this country; and so long as the European nations maintain their present monetary systems and systems of land tenure, wages must always be low there, and a great many people will be out of employment; and as these will compete with the employed for a chance to work, the tendency of wages is and always will be toward the lowest sum which will sustain the life of the laborer. But I fail to see how placing a tariff upon manufactured articles and allowing free importation of labor is going greatly to help the laborers of this country or prevent the tendency to falling prices here; or how it is to benefit more than a very small class of our citizens.

"For example, a tariff of two dollars a thousand on lumber compels the Canadian lumber dealer to add two dollars to the price per thousand of the lumber that he ships across Detroit river, and sells to the people in Michigan ;but it does not prevent the Michigan lumberman from employing Canadian choppers and sawyers at the same wages they are paid in Canada, plus the trifling expense of their trip across the lake, while it enables him to obtain from the consumers of his lumber the two dollars per thousand which his Canadian competitor pays to our government as tariff.

"Now, it may be this is not a fair example of the workings of the tariff in all cases, but I take it that the natural law of trade is the true one; and, if there are any facts existing which seem to make it necessary to violate a natural law of trade, or place obstacles

in the way of its action, that the cause for the seeming necessity is to be sought for, and will be found in the violation of some other natural law of trade. Some law way back perhaps, and which upon the face of it appears to have no near connection with this one, but which if discovered and obeyed, will right both wrongs.

"Trade is, or should be, founded upon the idea of an equitable exchange of commodities based upon their cost in labor; the skill requisite for their production being taken into consideration as one of the components of production.

"The theory of our govermnent is, that what the laborer or citizen can do for himself individually, or by combining with some portion of his fellows less than the whole, that the government shall leave him to do. But that that which he cannot do, except unitedly and as a whole, the government shall do for all the people.

"If I understand it, it is upon this theory that the government coins money but refuses to give employment to the idle laborers of the country except upon such public works as are being carried on without considering the needs of the people for employment.

"Now, since the products of labor are exchanged through the medium of money, and since the government denies the power of the citizen or of any less a number of them than the whole to make money, and as government also denies its own right to employ any citizen upon a simple plea of being unable to obtain employment elsewhere, it seems to follow logically that the government fails to perform its duty to its citizens unless it furnishes them with that which—being the medium of exchange---is necessary to enable them to keep themselves employed.

"Not to do this is for the government to become a party to their enforced idleness; and by making it impossible for all to be employed at one time, to compel them to compete one with another for the privilege of laboring; and thus slowly but certainly reduce the standard of wages to that which it has reached in portions of Europe, or the smallest sum which will sustain life and permit generation to continue."

"Your position is certainly logical," said Swanson, as Nixon paused. "Indeed, I must say I think it impregnable. Since money is absolutely necessary to the exchange of wealth, and as exchange is necessary to the continued production of wealth, and since the government reserves the right to coin money, it follows that the government must provide means whereby its citizens may obtain the money necessary to the making of their exchanges. But does not the government do this? True, it has recently demonetized silver, which I see now it ought not to have done, but it still coins gold and it keeps a large number of greenbacks in circulation; and lest this be not enough, it has established the National Banking System, and has so framed the law governing the issue of charters to banks that every state and almost every community has one or more of them, and if more money is needed at any point, the banks stand ready to furnish it. How can the government do more? I ask because I want your view and opinions. I know some of your labor men are opposed to the National Banks, but I never knew exactly why. I own I have always regarded the National Banking System as the best this country or any other ever had. But I know you must have good reason for opposing it, and as I am to be your candidate, I wish

to understand your reasons, so that I may represent you fairly when I attempt to speak for you."

"I am very glad to give you my reasons for opposing the National Banks, Mr. Swanson," replied Nixon, "and if you will return with me to our first proposition, I think I can make plain to you why the banks do not fill the bill, or why the government has failed in its duty to its citizens in adopting the banks as a medium through which the people may get the money necessary to the making of their exchanges, and so keep themselves employed.

"Our first proposition was that inasmuch as the people cannot produce without they can exchange, and cannot exchange without money, and as the government reserves to itself and denies to its citizens the power of making money, it is the duty of the government to provide those of its citizens who wish to produce wealth for exchange, with the medium of exchange, which they can procure nowhere else. Upon that proposition we were agreed, were we not?"

"Certainly," replied Swanson, "that is perfectly clear and logical. A government that claims to be run in the interest of the people can have no possible cause for refusing to do for the people that which is necessary to their prosperity and happiness, and which it forbids them to do for themselves."

"And do you think the government has performed its duty to those who produce all the wealth of the country, when, instead of furnishing them with the money necessary to enable them to exchange their products with one another, it has furnished it instead to the class that produces nothing—to the banks?"

So earnest had Nixon become in the presentation of his thought that he assumed much the position of an

attorney in court questioning a witness; leaning forward in his seat and looking intently at Swanson, and even, as he put the final question, emphasizing it by slightly raising his hand with the index finger extended and pointing directly at that gentleman.

This action of Nixon, together with the fact that he felt himself being put at a disadvantage in the argument, and in the presence of a young lady whose admiration he very much desired to inspire, rather ruffled our prospective congressman and he moved a little uneasily in his chair; there was a slight note of irritation in his voice as he replied:

"You would not want the government to give money to the wealth producers, would you?"

Nixon was silent for a moment; he had noted the irritation in Swanson's voice, and regretted having exhibited so much earnestness as to have provoked it. He felt no embarrassment because of it, however, and his silence was not due to any fear that he could not answer the question put to him so as to bring out the truth of his own theories. He was silent, because Swanson's evident lack of thought upon the subject, and his irritation at having the facts in the case and the principle involved brought clearly before him, had started the query in his own mind whether or not it was possible ever to induce any considerable number of the people to give sufficient thought to the question to enable them to act intelligently upon it.

"At what cost to the banks does the government furnish them their notes?" he asked at last.

The quesion was put in a most respectful tone of voice, as if from a desire for information. Instead of looking at Swanson now, Mr. Nixon's gaze was fixed

upon the floor, and he seemed not wholly to have recalled his mind from its wanderings.

Swanson answered promptly and correctly, showing he had a general understanding of the law governing the banks.

"The government furnishes the bank-notes to the banks at one per cent."

"And that one per cent.," queried Nixon in the same tone of voice; "is that to cover the cost to the government of printing the notes furnished the banks?"

"I suppose so."

"Then the government furnishes the banks money at cost. I think the men and women who produce wealth would be satisfied if the government would furnish them money on the same terms."

"But the banks deposit government bonds as security for the notes furnished them; and anybody who has government bonds can take in four of his neighbors, organize a bank, and get these notes on the same terms as any other bank," returned Mr. Swanson.

"I thought we were agreed, Mr. Swanson," said Nixon, with a smile, "that it was the duty of government to furnish those who produced wealth with the medium of exchange. If you are going to argue now, that it is the duty of the govermnent to furnish those who produce nothing with the medium of exchange, why, that is a different thing, and I must disagree with you."

Swanson laughed good naturedly. He had recovered from his irritation, and rather admired the mingling of shrewdness and candor which Nixon evinced in his handling of the subject.

"You ought to have been an attorney, Mr. Nixon," he said; "you would have made a splendid one; and

I have no doubt you ought to go to Congress instead of me."

"I told you Mr. Nixon knew all about it," laughed Miss Mason, who had sat silently watching and listening while the two young men argued. "He hasn't done anything else but study this question for the last year—except to work in the mill daytime," she added, laughing again at her own words.

The two gentlemen joined in the laugh right heartily; and for a few moments the conversation took on a lighter character, and consisted principally of harmless jokes and pleasant badinage. And then Swanson, turning to Nixon, said:

"I can't let you off without one more question. You do not, I suppose, want the government to hand out money to everybody who produces wealth indiscriminately? Now what security have the wealth producers generally to offer the government on which you would advise it to issue and loan them notes?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Swanson," replied Nixon, "but I have not said that the government should loan the people money. We have not been discussing the question of loaning to the people. We agreed that it was the duty of the government to furnish the people who produce wealth with the medium of exchange. If they cannot get it except by borrowing it, then it is clearly the duty of government to loan it to them. What security do the National Banks give the government for the notes which it furnishes them?"

"The best possible security; the bonds or notes of the government."

"And who is security for the bonds or notes? Who, and what property is liable for the payment?"

"Why, the government; that is the people are liable;

that is—why the bonds make the best possible security for the National Bank notes."

"Exactly. The bonds are security for the notes, and the property of the people is security for the bonds. Here, as always, the people who produce wealth are the final and best security. Upon them rests the burden of payment. They, and they alone, are good security. Would they be any less good security if the notes now furnished the banks at cost of printing, were furnished to the producer instead?"

"I see you have cornered me again," laughed Swanson; "and I will own you know more about the financial question than I have ever thought of; but I promise to post myself before I take a seat in Congress, if I ever do. I concede all you assert regarding the necessities of the producers of wealth for a medium of exchange, and the duty of the government to furnish it. I don't see so clearly how it is to be done, except through the banks or similar institutions."

"That's because you are a lawyer, Mr. Swanson," exclaimed Miss Mason, laughing and clapping her hands. "I have heard of the quibbles of lawyers and I think the banks are just that; they are quibbles that ought to be got around or just pushed out of the way, because they stand between the people and justice. And when you get to Congress we shall expect you to do it for us."

"All alone, Miss Mason? Do you expect me to abolish the banks and print the notes and deliver them to the wealth producers all alone by myself? If so, I am afraid I am doomed to bring disappointment to you, and disgrace upon myself by failure."

Swanson laughed a jolly kind of a laugh; the girl a

joyous, ringing one, and Nixon smiled gravely, but pleasantly at the sally.

And then Nixon rose and took his hat from the centre table where he laid it when he entered.

"I don't think I will wait longer for your father, Miss Jennie," he said, "but will call again some other time."

He offered his hand to Swanson, and the two shook heartily, and with evident feelings of respect and esteem.

"I shall see you often, I hope, Mr. Nixon," said Swanson. "I don't intend this to be the last lesson I am to have from you. If all the labor people were as clear in their ideas and arguments as you are, I think they would soon have less reason to complain that they do not get what they want from Congress."

"Our people," replied Nixon with a twinkle in his eye, "like some able gentlemen in some of the professions, have not given as much thought to the subject of the National finances as their own interests would seem to suggest as wise; but we are educating and agitating, and hope for a better time coming. I shall certainly try and see you occasionally during the canvass, and will do anything in my power to forward your chances at any time. If you should need me, let me know."

He bowed politely though familiarly to the girl and passed out of the house and into the street.

"Quite a remarkable man," observed Swanson, when he was out of hearing; "I had no idea there was so much to him. He is usually rather reticent, is he not? Or is he always inspired when in your presence, to such eloquence and clearness of thought?"

A blush overspread the face of the girl at the com-

pliment implied, but she answered readily enough:

"If you mean is Mr. Nixon always as good a talker as he appeared to-day, I answer yes; provided he talks on the same subject. Upon other subjects I think he does not talk so well; probably because he does not feel so deeply. Do you know, Mr. Swanson, that the laboring men—those who understand these questions, or think they do—feel very deeply indeed regarding them? They honestly and earnestly believe that without a change in what they call our economic system, the people in America will soon be as poor and degraded as the lowest and worst of Europe. They do indeed; they go farther and contend even that our civilization is at stake on the issue, and will rise or fall with its settlement. But there, I am not going to make you think I am like Mr. Nixon, can't talk of anything else. Come out into the garden and let me get you a button-hole bouquet to wear to church to-night."

Swanson responded very promptly and with pleasure. He was, in fact, becoming rather anxious to get off of a theme in the discussion of which he felt he must appear to disadvantage in the eyes of this beautiful girl, whom he admired the more, the more he saw of her. And when after a quarter of an hour spent in examining the flowers they returned to the house, and the young man took his leave, it was with permission to return later in the evening and escort her to church.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which the "fine Italian hand" of the skilled politician is seen manipulating the wires. Mr. Swanson is permitted to remain upon the respectable side of the social wash-out. He is nominated for Congress by the party of morality, and makes a speech. Peters leads a procession.

Jennie Mason was very happy that night as she walked to church with Horace Swanson, and sat at his side in the pew well up toward the front, where the ushers had conducted them.

She tried hard to listen to the sermon but could get no clear idea of what it was about, except in a very general way, for her thoughts kept wandering in a manner which she assured herself, as often as she recalled them, was not the way for them to do in church, and during sermon time especially.

But hardly would she have done lecturing them for having to be recalled so frequently before they were off again upon exploring voyages into the future, or floating about in the present upon some fleecy cloud of lamb's wool whose edges, mayhap, were rose-tinted but whose supporting column she neither saw nor sought to see.

She was not in love.

Oh, no—not yet.

She was but in the border land—the Land of What-ifs? And May-be-so's!

The land where dreams are not, but only the shadow of dreams. The land where Love's spirit awaits its body and asks to be transformed from love to lover.

She knew, though she did not acknowledge it to herself that she was pleased with Mr. Swanson's attentions, and happy because he was by her side as her escort.

She did not try to suppress the feeling of exultation that was in her heart when men and women went out of their way to get an opportunity to shake hands decorously with him, or watched their chance to exchange nods across several rows of pews. She said to heself she exulted at the honor done him as the representative of the cause of the laborers with whom were all her sympathies; and did not deny to herself that she was happy in being by his side where just a faint ray of the honor was reflected on her.

For in her innocence, she did not dream that it was not as the friend of the laborers he was being honored, but as the one whom the politicians had determined should betray and destroy them.

Yet, such was the case; and the little social favors being accorded him were the result of an edict which had gone forth, not openly and to the public, but silently and to the trusted few. Gone forth from these shrewd and unscrupulous leaders, informing them that Swanson was to be endorsed by the Party of Respectability—with a big R—and of Morality, with a big M; and that he was to be surrounded with such men and such influences as, if it did not wean him from all sympathy with the laboring men, would at least make it impossible for him to accomplish anything for them, and so discourage them and in the end disrupt their organization.

This, and not a respect for labor or its representative was the secret of the little attentions bestowed upon Swanson. This was why men who were recognized leaders in politics, in society and in the church, went out of their way, or reached across the aisle to clasp hands with him, and to express in low tones befitting the place, their pleasure at meeting him—as if they did not meet him on the streets every day.

This was the initiative. These men were giving to society—respectable society—the assurance that Mr. Swanson was not to be dropped because he had of late been rubbing against greasy mechanics.

To the initiated it was an intimation that Mr. Swanson had associated himself with the laboring men as their leader not wholly of his own motion, or for his own pleasure, but rather for the purpose of performing a service to society, and possibly, and at least indirectly, to the church; certainly to those whose right it is to be well-to-do and respectable; those whose duty it is to see that the present satisfactory condition of things was not disturbed by the cranky whims of a set of men who neither knew what they wanted, nor why they wanted it.

Had not the leaders of the party of Respectability fully decided to accept Mr. Swanson as its candidate for Congress, these little attentions would not have been shown him.

As the representative of the working men simply, he would have been shown to a pew much nearer the door and seated in company with working men, had any been present, which was seldom the case.

Swanson felt something of this, though he did not know how entirely it was true. Naturally he deemed a portion of the courtesies shown him to be due to

the general esteem in which he had always been held in the community, and to which had now been added the distinction of a nomination to Congress by a portion of the citizens of the district.

He had not yet advanced far enough in the school of practical politics to recognize the hands that worked the wires so smoothly and so skillfully. He saw little more than the majority of those present saw; an evidence that he was to retain his position and standing in society in spite of his alliance with the laboring men; and felt as others felt, that this meant that the political party with which he had always affiliated in the past was to be his ally and not his opposer in his race for Congress. And if a feeling that he was in some sense betraying the laboring-men swept across his consciousness and gave him a momentary sense of shame, it was instantly replaced by one of grateful pride at the respect shown him and at the power that compelled it.

He comprehended as little of the sermon as the girl at his side, but his thoughts wandered in a different direction from hers; although sensible of her presence, her face was not in the flash light pictures which his fancy saw between the efforts he made to concentrate his mind upon the sermon; but when the services were over, and they emerged with the crowd from the church door and she put her arm through his for the walk home, he felt a little thrill of exquisite pleasure run through his being, and when parting at her father's door, he held her hand for just a second, he again thrilled with her same bewildering sensation.

A week later the party of Respectability and high Moral character met in convention; and when it had

ended its labors, Horace Swanson was twice a nominee for Congress.

Royalty had accepted the representative put forward by the canaille.

The lion and the lamb were prepared to lie down together.

The result was announced amidst cheers.

The band played, and men threw their hats into the air.

That night the laboring men paraded.

Peters led them, and carried a transparency with the motto "Laboring men to the front!" While in different parts of the procession line, other banners with various devices of a similar character were seen.

The organ of the party of Respectabiliy declared the following day that there were fully three thousand laboring men with torches in the line. It was profuse in compliments of the men, whom it denominated the "Sturdy sons of toil," and "Gallant protectors of our Home Industries."

Swanson was serenaded and made a speech from the balcony of the Eagle Hotel, to a crowd that filled the street in front, and for a hundred feet either way.

He thanked the laboring men for the confidence reposed in him, and promised never to betray them. He complimented them on the display they had made in procession, and from their numbers and enthusiasm predicted a glorious victory at the polls.

He said little about principles, for he felt that here he trod upon dangerous ground, and lacked confidence in his skill to tread it safely.

But he was mentally stimulated by the surroundings and the occasion and the honor done him, and he spoke fluently and with force. The mass of men in front

cheered whenever he closed a well-rounded sentence, and broke forth into yells of delighted enthusiasm when he sent a barbed shaft in the direction of the opposite party.

When he referred to the action of the convention held that day he spoke of it as an endorsement of the candidate of the laboring men and by inference drew the deduction that it was an endorsement of their demands; although the two platforms contained but one plank in common, that upon the tariff; and the convention had not endorsed him as a representative of the laboring men, had not even referred to him as such, but had simply nominated him outright as if its members regarded him solely as a candidate pledged to the platform of their party.

But the wildest cheering came when, referring to the double nomination, he declared that it prestaged the good time coming—the time when the lamb of labor and the lion of capital should lie down together and Mutual Good-Will should lead them as a little child.

Then it was that everybody went wild. The party bosses leaned over the balcony and cheered and swung their hats, and in front the men with torches held them aloft and waved them to and fro in the air and yelled themselves hoarse in the effort to express their approval of the sentiment—and the man with the bass drum hit it several resounding taps.

The party bosses, together with as many of the leading citizens of the place as affiliated with the party, as could be accomodated with seats on the balcony were present during the parade and the speech; and when Swanson ceased speaking, shook hands and congratulated him warmly upon what they called his eloquent

address. And when it was all over, everybody went away happy.

Everybody except Nixon.

And why not?

Were not the lion and the lamb about to lie down together?

And if the lion was happy because he had secretly made up his mind to devour the lamb before he arose, the lamb was equally happy in his ignorance of the lion's intention. The lamb thought—so far as it thought at all—that the lion had really changed its nature and had resolved to feed on grass the remainder of its days; or if not that, then at least to divide fairly whatever game the two jointly took.

And Horace Swanson's sleep was sound and perfect. He was weary of body, but his mind was at ease and his conscience quiet. All these had been on extra duty for days past; but now the necessity, the good of action was over for the present, and a time for rest had come. Why should Horace Swanson not sleep soundly?

Sound also and sweet was the sleep of the political bosses. They felt their work had been well done, and that their purposes were sure of accomplishment. As for consciences, they daily offered thanks that their consciences were thoroughly educated, and understood perfectly the necessity in politics of fitting the means to the end. Whenever they had any political jobs to attend to they so informed their consciences, and their consciences went accomodatingly off to bed and to sleep until called.

The sleep of Mr. Peters was heavy at times but not perfect. He had drank considerable bad liquor in honor of himself and the, so far, successful issue of his

schemes, and his sleep was broken at times by bad dreams; though when he was awake sufficiently to realize the fact and so dismiss the disagreeable visions which disturbed him, he was happy.

He had enjoyed the glory of appearing at the head of the procession of workingmen as their leader; and not only had all expenses been paid by the bosses of the party of Morality, but he had managed to obtain an appropriation, for his own special benefit, of a sufficient amount to enable him to continue to devote his time to politics—that is, to keeping the laboring men in line for Swanson and the State ticket of the afore mentioned party of Moral Ideas, until election day; which meant continued prominence and no work for at least sixty days longer.

Only Nixon, of all the participants in the day's doings, whom we know, could not sleep, but lay tossing to and fro upon his bed the whole night through. He, whose personal interest seemed least, was alone disquieted by the day's events.

He alone saw with feelings of discouragement and deep regret, impending disaster hang low over the cause of the laborers.

CHAPTER IX.

Suggests some rea sons why several things might have been different.

During the weeks that immediately followed his second nomination, Swanson had little time for social visits, and Miss Mason saw him but seldom. Once or twice he called at her father's cottage, but remained only a short time, pleading engagements or the necessity of doing some work at his office.

He was indeed studying to post himself somewhat upon the issues involved in the canvass, and in preparing to speak upon them, it having been decided by those having the management of the campaign that he should speak at least twice in each county in his district during the last thirty days before the election.

That he called upon Miss Mason at all under the circumstances was sufficient evidence of interest in her, to keep alive any seeds of love for him that might have found lodgement in her breast, and even to cause them to put forth tender shoots.

His manner toward her on these occasions was always intensely respectful and slightly chivalric ; while hers was frank and open, as indeed it was to all.

Their conversation was always largely of his plans and prospects. This was natural, considering the fact that her sympathies were with the laboring men, and the subject one which formed the chief theme of interest between her father and such of their neighbors

and friends as occasionally dropped in for an evening's chat.

Nixon was a frequent caller, but always apparently for the purpose of obtaining advice and encouragement from Mr. Mason regarding the labor movement. He was no longer president of the labor organization, Peters having been elected to supersede him at the regular election recently held; but he abated no jot nor tittle of his interest, but spent most of his evenings, all of them in fact, in efforts to make more perfect the organization of the working men, and in educating them upon economic questions.

Miss Mason respected Mr. Nixon very highly. She thought him a very good and a very generous man. She knew him to be very earnest and conscientious; and too, she knew that before men and women of his own class he could make a better speech upon the labor question than any other among the labor leaders; for she had occasionally attended their meetings and had heard most or all of their ablest speakers. And in her talks with Mr. Swanson, she always referred to Mr. Nixon as one who knew all about these matters, bringing him in and quoting his sayings in a way that once or twice rather grated upon that gentleman's feelings for a second.

He began to recognize, in a degree which she could not, the fact that his own course, past and future, had not been and was not likely to be in line with Nixon's ideas, and so was not too well pleased to have Nixon and Nixon's opinions so frequently held up for his observation and endorsement.

On her part Miss Mason, not doubting that he felt the same unselfish desire as herself to serve the cause of the laborers, supposed she was doing the greatest

possible favor in referring him to the purest and safest source of information known to her.

And he had said to her banteringly:

"I am not certain I shall not become envious of Mr. Nixon since you seem to think him so very wise. Don't you really believe now that I ought to resign the nomination in his favor, and let him go to Congress instead of me?"

And she—never perceiving his irritation—had replied honestly:

"No, indeed! Mr. Nixon understands these questions better than you, because he is a workingman himself, and has spent all his leisure time for two or three years, studying them. But he could never impress people with their importance as you will be able to do when you have studied them too, as of course you will do when you get to Congress and have to introduce bills, and speak and urge their passage. I should so like to hear you make a speech before all the other congressmen, some of whom have helped to pass such unjust laws. I am sure you will make them ashamed of what they have done, and anxious to undo it."

This compliment was at once so frankly and naively expressed, that, although recalling to mind some things he had learned since his nomination, of the intentions of the political bosses, and his present relation to them, he felt that he was poorly entitled to it, it yet served to allay the ruffled feelings which Miss Mason's references to Nixon had provoked, and he made some laughing reply to the effect that he hoped she might not be disappointed in regard to the influence he should wield in case he was so fortuntae as to be elected. And after the rather unnecessary ceremony of taking her hand for an instant, left the cottage.

Approaching his office, he saw some one sitting on the steps evidently waiting his coming.

At first he thought it was Peters. That personage had been very persistent in his friendship for Swanson ever since their introduction to each other, and nearly every day since Swanson's nomination he had dropped into the latter's office; sometimes remaining for an hour or more, much to Swanson's discomfort.

For he had learned to estimate Peters at something near his true value. He saw him a man of little ability and less moral character; and almost entirely lacking in those finer sensibilities that mark the distinction between the gentleman and the loafer.

The air of mystery with which Peters constantly approached him under pretense of imparting information that was of no value, or giving advice that was worthless if not insulting to one who felt he still had use for his integrity of character, had done more to wean Swanson's sympathies from the laboring men than all that the combined influence of the political bosses had accomplished.

Here was this man whom he saw to be without the first instincts of true nobility, a man of low morals, of offensive manners, of weak sympathies, intense and grasping selfishness, yet the formally accredited representative of the organized laboring men of the district.

A man whose every thought was of himself; who worked and schemed to advance his own interests utterly regardless of those of the men he professed to represent; and ready, eager, to enter into any arrangement that promised a reward to himself, with the men to whose influence—as a class—the legislation that the laborers complained of was due.

And more than this, he had been as free in his

demands for money as he had been in the giving of advice, and upon one plea or another, had really drawn a considerable sum from Swanson's not too plethoric pocket-book.

These sums he had represented as necessary to meet certain supposed expenses growing out of Swanson's relations to the labor organization; but of late, Swanson had had good reason to suspect that instead of using the money in the legitimate work of organization and education for which he had solicited it, he had spent it on his own appetites and passions.

Is it any wonder then that Swanson began to look upon the laboring men as unfitted to shape the political issues of the campaign, or to control the destinies of the nation?

Had he known the laboring men more intimately, known their condition and surroundings and the cause for them, he had judged them far differently.

For why should he expect that men who are compelled to labor from early morn until the setting of the sun, and often far beyond it, and who from this fact alone, have little time and less inclination to study or think upon subjects outside of their daily round of toil—why, I ask, should Mr. Swanson have expected these men to possess a greater knowledge, or to show a more intelligent comprehension of economic questions than he himself possessed or could show; he, who had all the advantages of a liberal education, and leisure to pursue whatever line of thought or investigation he chose?

Or if the fund of knowledge possessed by Mr. Nixon and that gentleman's clear understanding of these questions, impressed a man like himself as indicating a person of more than ordinary ability and insight, why

should Mr. Swanson have been surprised that men of less information than himself should receive similar impressions regarding such a man as Mr. Peters, who certainly did possess some superficial knowledge of the question, and with it sufficient command of language and self-confidence to talk upon it in public, or before the organization to which they belonged?

Conscious of their own ignorance, impressed by the iterated and re-iterated assertions of the so-called statesmen of both political parties, that economic questions were too abstruse and deep for the comprehension of the common people, the laboring men had followed the leaders of their respective parties until a constantly falling scale of wages had brought them to the verge of revolt; which, with their ignorance of the real source of their troubles means the point where assumed superior knowledge and bitter denunciation give temporary leadership, and make the demagogue the architect of history.

The working men really knew very little about Peters. He had not lived long among them—at least, had not grown up in their midst—but had "struck" the town in search of a job about two years previous; had obtained a situation in one of the factories, and being a fair mechanic, had held his position as others had done . He had seemed a good enough fellow—though perhaps a little conceited—before they formed their organization, but when organization was talked of, his fine opinion of himself coupled with his readiness to talk from the rostrum had in some sense appeared as evidences of ability, real ability: and had quickly raised him to the position of leadership, which he now held.

To those who felt themselves totally and almost

hopelessly ignorant upon economic questions, Peters' superficial knowledge passed for deep reasoning; and the assurance which enabled him to exhibit this supposed knowledge in public appeared to them good reason for putting him forward as their representative and spokesman. In reality, however, his recent election over Nixon to the highest place in their organization was due much more to scheming on the part of Mr. Peters than to any feeling among the members that he was a better or even so good a man as Mr. Nixon.

I say, had Horace Swanson known all this, or had he been capable from his position and surroundings of understanding it, he would have felt his sympathies for the laboring people increased instead of diminished by the fact of Peter's posing as their representative. But he did not know and could not understand, and as a consequence, his sympathies were beginning to fade, and when he saw one he imagined to be Peters waiting for him upon his office steps he half muttered a curse which included, with the man who claimed to represent them, those whom he claimed to represent.

As he came nearer, however, near enough to see with some distinctness even in the semi-darkness of a moonlit evening, he perceived that he was mistaken in thinking the one in waiting to be Peters, and felt a decided sense of relief.

An instant later he held out his hand to the person who rose from the steps at his approach and said cordially and kindly:

"Hello, Doctor, is that you? I am glad to see you. Where have you been all this time?" And as he inserted the key in the lock and threw open the door.

"Come in, you must stay with me to-night." Which was exactly what Doctor had come intending to do.

Since Swanson's nomination by the party of Morality with a big M, Doctor had become oppressed with a desire to hear once more, and from his own lips, the assurance that this man whom he loved and trusted, would be true to the cause of the oppressed and suffering workingmen and their families; and he had come hoping to hear Swanson's own words on the subject.

He knew that he himself would have neither the language nor the courage to put the question direct to his friend, but had come hoping there would drop from his lips some expression that would prove how much he did him injustice in wishing for verbal evidence of his faithfulness to the confidence reposed in him.

CHAPTER X.

The ball opens, and the opposition candidate makes it warm for our friend Swanson. Some little games that were worked in the back townships. Mr. Hardiman puts in a claim on behalf of the Hoe and Subsoiler; aud Mr. Swanson starts on a hasty trip to Washington.

And now the ball is fairly opened. The opposition party has renominated the present member of Congress, adopted a platform differing but little from that of the party which has nominated Swanson, thrown a sop in the way of a labor plank to the working men and declared they and not the other fellows are, and always have been the true friends of the wealth producers.

The candidates of both parties throughout the state from county coroner up to governor of the commonwealth have been assessed to defray the expenses of the canvass. The corporations upon one side and the saloons upon the other have contributed their quoto of the campaign fund. The party organs have warmed up to their work of systematically coating the eyes of the voters with the slime of prejudice; the flood-gates of calumny and falsehood are opened, and honor, reputation, truth, the rights of men and the wrongs of women are forgotten, denied, tramped on, in the mad scramble for office.

Swanson is speaking every day and often twice a day, trying to cover the ground after his opponent,

who is an old campaigner, and is making it warm for his less experienced competitor.

Meetings in court-houses and in the open air in the day time, and in country school houses at night, is the order of the campaign; and frequently after speaking to a large crowd in some county-seat town in the afternoon, Swanson is whisked off to a back township for a talk at night, where there is a little disaffection being manifested, or where the voters are not sufficiently impresed with the magnitude of the issues involved in the canvas to turn out to the general rallies.

Then there are the German settlements in the country and the Polish colonies in the larger towns and cities that have to be looked to, and to whom it will not do to present the claims of the candidates in the same light as in other communities.

"I've got something out here in the wagon that will make the rest of my speech. It made me tired talking to that temperance crowd up at the county-seat this afternoon, trying to convince them that I was an out and out prohibitionist, and so I brought this along to talk for me to-night," is the way one of the candidates put it to a crowd of Germans congregated in a little school-house in one of the back townships, and pointing to a keg of beer that two men were at that instant bringing into the building.

And when the uproarious cheers that greeted this announcement, and the one that followed it in greeting the keg itself had subsided enough for the speaker to make himself heard, he added:

"I reckon you men can keep this little speech from being reported in the papers. We don't want to hurt the feelings of our prohibition friends by a too open

assertion of our rights—at least not until after election."

And while the tumult of cheers, stamping of feet and clapping of hands was at its highest, this statesman came out from behind the little table which acted as a desk for the teacher during the school hours and taking up one of a dozen or more tin cups that had been brought with the keg, filled it with beer, and as the others were filled and passed to hands outstretched to grasp them, lifted it on high and announced the toast:

"Here's luck, and hoping we beat 'em bad at the polls."

The canvass was at its hottest, and election day was but two weeks off, when Mr. Swanson, who was in one of the most distant counties of his district, received a note telling him it was imperatively necessary that he should return home at once for counsel with friends, and intimating that there was very serious trouble brewing from some quarter, though what the nature of it was, was not stated in the note that was handed him by a man sent expressly to carry it and see that it reached its destination with speed and certainty.

The note informed him that a good speaker had been sent to fill his appointments until he could return to them himself; and that he must come to headquarters, which were in his own town of Smithville, by first train without fail.

Anxious and fearful as well as curious to know what could possibly have arisen to cause such immediate and pressing necessity for his presence there at this particular moment, he started at once to obey the summons, taking a train that would bring him there about nine o'clock in the evening.

He knew, of course, something affecting the canvass

and involving his own interests as a candidate had unexpectedly arisen, and tried to think what it could possibly be, but could reach no satisfactory conclusion.

What occured to him as most probable was some defection of the organized laboring men; for while he had striven the best he could to hold their confidence, and even permitted his name to be placed upon the rolls of one of their clubs as a member, and had been with them on two or three occasions at their regular Saturday night meetings, he was yet aware that his opponent had done about the same thing at his home in another part of the district, and that it was not yet certain who would receive the larger portion of the labor vote.

He thought of Peters, and wondered if he had sold out to the opposite party, and was trying to deliver the labor vote to it. He felt that Peters was fully capable of such treachery if the inducement of a sufficient personal reward were offered him; and he more than half suspected that this was the source of the trouble.

Then he thought of Nixon and wondered if it were possible that his course was so little satisfactory to him that he had decided not to support him farther, and had advised the laboring men not to vote for him. Thinking of this, he could not help realizing that he had not come up to Nixon's standard of what a workingman's candidate should be, but at the same time he felt Nixon was too honorabe to desert him under the circumstances, with the full knowledge that no better representative of their order was before them for their suffrages; and he dismissed from his mind all thought of Nixon's responsibility for the trouble that had arisen.

Whatever it was, he was quite sure that Nixon was not the cause of it.

"Anyway, there is no use worrying nor trying to imagine what it is," he said mentally; "I'll find out when I get there. I don't believe it can be anything very serious; don't see how it can be."

Nevertheless, he did worry and did strive to divine what the trouble was, but it was with no feeling that he had done so, that he stepped off the cars at his own town of Smithville.

The minute his foot touched the platform his hand was grasped by one of his political friends and backers of the party of Respectability and Morals, who drew him quickly but quietly aside toward a close carriage that stood in waiting.

"Come, this way, Swanson; no—don't wait; those fellows have not recognized you, time enough to shake with them later. Here, give me your gripsack; there, jump in, I want to talk with you privately. Old Hardiman has sprung a trap on us and if we don't get out of it pretty quick you are gone up sure, so far as going to Congress this trip, is concerned."

"Sprung a trap on us? Hardiman; what, how, where has Hardiman got any grip on us? I don't understand."

"No; I suppose not. That is because you are a little green in politics, and because you don't know Hardiman. The old cuss has just been laying in wait for us ever since you were nominated. He don't care a snap of his finger who is elected only so far as he can use the man that is; he has acted with the opposition about as often as with us in the past, and always for some special benefit to himself. In fact he tried to play a good deal the same game on them two years

ago that he is playing on us now; not the same, you understand, but one very much like it; but they were strong enough then to defy him, and besides did not have just the right kind of influence to accomplish what he asked, and so he came over to us and voted his men for our ticket from top to bottom. That helped us some, but not enough to put our candidate through in this district. Now, however, things have changed somewhat; we have gained a little in some communities by working the temperance racket among the church folks; and beside, Hardiman now employs nearly three times as many men as he did then; and these, together with what we have gained in other ways, and with what votes of unemployed men the labor organization can give you—if we can hold them—will pull you through slick as grease. But we have got to have the votes of Hardiman's men or we are gone up, and the old villain knows it and has set his stakes accordingly; and nothing will ever induce him to pull 'em up except compliance with his demands."

"Well, what is it he wants?" asked Swanson, a good deal mystified by what his companion had told him.

"Well, you see, Hardiman publishes a paper, "The Hoe and Subsoiler," you know. Well, it's nothing in the world but an advertising sheet for his own goods and he ought to pay circular postage, or one cent an ounce, for sending it through the mails; but he denies that it is an advertising sheet and declares it is an agricultural paper simply and entitled to go through the mails at pound rates. He got it started that way at first, and by taking subscribers at a trifling price and offering big premiums to getters up of clubs, and by adding long lists of names of farmers who never did subscribe, but who were willing enough, I suppose,

to take the paper if it cost them nothing, in one way and another, he drummed up a list of about fifty thousand subscribers; but then somebody, I suppose some rival manufacturer, put the Post-office department on to the facts in the case and it made a ruling compelling him to pay circular postage, which means one cent for each copy of "The Hoe and Subsoiler" sent through the mails.

"Naturally this hurts. One cent per copy on fifty thousand copies is five hundred dollars a month; and five hundred dollars a month is six thousand dollars a year, which as compared with two cents per pound, for a little sheet like the Hoe and Subsoiler, means a difference of about five thousand, five hundred dollars a year.

"If he stops sending out the paper it means a falling off in his business, or the paying to other papers a good round sum for advertising in them, and he naturally, I reckon, kicks against anything that interferes with his profits!"

"Well, what does he want of us? He don't expect us to pay his postage bills does he?"

"Not exactly. He don't want to pay any postage bills. What he demands of us—of you—is that you get the ruling of the Post Office department changed, and allow him to send his paper through the mails at pound rates as he did when he first started it. He swears that if this is not done he will vote every one of his five hundred men solidly against you and against our whole state ticket."

"Wants me to change the ruling of the Department," gasped Swanson. "How can I change the ruling of a department of the government? Is the man crazy?"

"No, I reckon not," replied his companion. "I reckon

the old fellow knows what he's about, as well as any man in the country. You see he is working for Hardiman; and when he works for himself he generally looks things over pretty carefully and knows what he wants, and about what are his chances of getting it before he puts in his bill."

"But what can we do? I don't see that we can do anything. It looks to me as though this was simply an excuse for going over to the opposition and taking his crowd of workmen with him."

"I have no doubt he will do that if we don't get him what he wants; and we have got to do it. That is why we sent for you. You have got to go to Washington and see the assistant Postmaster and get him to reverse his ruling, so Hardiman's paper can go through the mails at pound rates. You can do it, you have to do it or lose the race. Our candidate for Governor will fnrnish you with a letter of introduction to the right man at Washington—who is a personal and political friend of his—and you can fix things up satisfactorily. We have already sent a man we can trust to the candidate for Governor to put him onto the game and get the letter you will need; and he will meet you at Crosstown where you will change cars for Washington at about five o'clock in the morning; and in thirty-six hours you will be in the Capitol, and forty-eight hours later will be at home again to take up your canvass."

"Do you mean I am to start to-night?"

"On the midnight train. There is not an hour to lose. Brown whom we sent to fill your appointments will keep the field for you until you get back. He is a good speaker and knows how to work things. I don't think you will lose much by your absence; but anyway, go you must; for if this thing isn't fixed up to suit Hardiman he will

put all our fat in the fire in this district sure, and may even lose us the state."

"But why don't the Governor go; our candidate I mean? His influence will certainly outweigh mine at Washington; especially as you say the man we have to deal with is a personal friend of his?"

"The Governor can't leave," returned the other. "His absence from the canvass at this time, and his presence in Washington would be noticed and commented on more than yours will be, and might even put stories afloat that we don't want to be bothered with at this stage of the game. Besides the Governor is an old politician and up to all the tricks of the opposition, and we need him to direct things and head off the other fellows; for the Lord or the devil only knows what they will be up to, or what trap they will spring on us at the last moment of the campaign."

This conversation had taken place between the two men while the carriage was driven slowly through the town, or from the depot which was on one side of the town to near the opposite side of the business centre, the driver evidently acting under instructions to go slowly; thus giving time for the friend who had met Swanson to acquaint him with the situation.

This man had been sent as the one most likely to influence Swanson in the manner desired by those who held the management and secrets of the campaign, and who were now waiting his arrival at the office of one of their number, which being situated in a portion of the town not much frequented at this hour had been selected as the best place for the meeting, which it was desired should attract as little attention from outsiders as possible,

"In fact it was considered advisable to prevent, if it could

be done, any knowledge of Swanson's being in town at this time, and of his hurried trip to Washington, which it had been decided he must take; hence the precaution of having him come on a train that arrived after business hours, the close carriage and the preparation to get him off on another train at midnight.

As Swanson and his companion approached and knocked at the room in which were assembled these half dozen men, the door was opened cautiously for a few inches and a face peered out at them for a brief space, and then, becoming certain of the identity of those on the outside, the door was swung back and they were bidden to enter.

As they did so, those within, who had been sitting about a table on which were various scraps and sheets of paper covered over with scrawls and columns of figures, rose to their feet and greeted Swanson in turn, familiarly and with cordiality; complimenting him on the gallant fight he was making, and, generally, causing him to feel that he was one of them, while at the same time conveying the impression that they were the able directors of a work of immense importance to somebody—presumably to the people, since as polititians they claimed—in public at least—to seek only the public good.

And in the presence and company of these men Swanson's spirits rose. He had felt fearfully depressed but a few moments before while listening to the information and instructions given him by his friend while in the carriage, but these men did not seem depressed or discouraged; on the contrary, there was an air of confidence and even of jollity upon them which at once raised Swanson's spirits and gave him new life and courage.

Observing that all the others were smoking he felt in

his own pocket for a cigar, and finding none accepted one of those offered him by two or three of the gentlemen at once, lit it, seated himself in a chair, elevated his feet to the table, and appeared—as he really felt himself to be—at home and in congenial company.

And when, after a little desultory conversation and a few jokes had passed about, the subject of Hardiman's demands, and the necessity of a trip to Washington was introduced, he assented promptly and cheerfully to the proposition already made known to him, and even got off a joke at his own expense in connection with the canvass and his flying trip to the Capital, which provoked the laughter of the others and induced the feeling among them that Swanson was true grit and that they could not have found a better man for their candidate if they had spent the entire season trying.

The fact was, that Swanson, generous by nature but easy in disposition, and readily susceptable to the influence of others, provided that influence appealed to his love of good fellowship and pleasant surroundings, felt a bond of sympathy with these men of strong will who admitted him into their confidence upon an equality, and seemed to regard him as entitled—with them—to succeed in his ambitions in life; and if it had occurred to him to contrast them with Peters or even with Nixon, representatives of the laboring men, he would have instinctively turned from those to these for companionship and association.

And he sat and smoked, and chatted with them of the campaign in the state and of his own prospects, and looked over the figures of the probable vote which they had made, based upon such advices as could be obtained, and did not contradict if he did not express approval

when one of their number commenting on the demands made by Hardiman remarked:

"Well I don't know as that is any more than his share of the spoils anyway. You can't expect men like him to work in politics for nothing, and he can't well leave his business to hold office."

"And besides that" was added, "he has promised to contribute five hundred dollars to the campaign fund if we do what he wants, and we need the money just about now pretty bad."

As midnight approached Swanson shook hands all around with those present, promised to telegraph from Washington under the initials H. S. the success of his mission, and then in company with his friend who had met him on his arrival, walked to the depot to take the train that was to bear him on his mission.

Once out of the presence of these gentlemen and alone with a single person upon the quiet streets, his thoughts took a different coloring again; and after walking a block or more in silence he said to his companion:

"How am I expected to approach our party upon the subject? I own to being rather at a loss to know how I am to proceed. This seems to me to be a very delicate business, to say the least of it."

"Oh you will get on all right" replied the other. "The Governor's letter will open the way if it does not do the whole business, which it probably will. All you'll have to do in any event is to make it clear to him that a failure to act will certainly lose us the District, and may lose us the state and so result in losing the Presidential election two years from now. You might add some suggestion of a return of favors if needed at any future time; but the Governor will no doubt do that in a way to be satisfactory to the party you go to see. However,

anything you think well to throw in won't do any harm, and may do good. As a member of Congress you will have influence in many quarters, and influence is what counts in Washington.

Ten minutes later Mr. Swanson was removing his outer garments preparatory to crawling into his bunk in a sleeping-car, hoping to get a few hours of needed rest before he would be called to change cars at Crosstown, where the messenger was to meet him with the letter from the candidate for governor of a state to an officer of the federal government asking him to violate the law in the interest of his party.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Hardiman having forgotten to close the door of his private office, Miss Jennie Mason overhears things not intended for her ears—and imparts them to others. Mr. Nixon starts out to find Mr. Swanson and inform him of what is up.

The little plan which Mr. Hardiman had fixed up, by which he was to save several thousand dollars annually in postage on "The Hoe and Subsoiler" was first made known to two or three of the local bosses of the party whom he had invited into his office for that purpose.

In the somewhat animated conversation that followed the announcement of his determination to vote his entire force of five hundred men against Swanson and the state ticket, if his demand were not complied with, no one observed that the door between the outer and inner offices was not closely shut, or remembered that Miss Jennie Mason—"Old Hardiman's pretty secretary"—was at her desk and could not avoid hearing what passed between those within.

When first aware that she could overhear what was being said, she strove not to listen or give attention to it; but as the voices grew more earnest and the name of Horace Swanson reached her ear she involuntarily ceased her work and listened.

At first she could not understand the meaning of what was being said farther than that Mr. Swanson's election was jeopardized from some cause. But as the discussion continued and the protests of the party leaders be-

came more decided Mr. Hardiman repeated his demands in tones that clearly reached her. His language, too, was such as to leave no doubt of his intention to enforce his demands; and evidently convinced his companions that farther opposition was useless; and compliance the only way to escape the defeat which would certainly result from a change of five or six hundred votes from their own ticket to that of the opposition.

Then followed a discussion how best to go to work to secure the reversal of the ruling of the department; and though now the voices dropped to a somewhat lower key the listener heard enough to make out that if Mr. Swanson refused to go to Washington at once and do something, she did not clearly understand what, his defeat at the polls was a certainty; and she half arose from her seat with the intention of going at once to find him, tell him of the danger that threatened his prospects and urge him to exert his every energy to accomplish the thing required of him.

Just what was the nature of the service demanded she did not understand, and did not stop to consider. The interest she felt in him and in the cause she regarded him as representing, made her feel deeply the danger that threatened and the necessity of prompt and effectual action; and she did not stop to question whether any principle of right or wrong was involved in the matter.

But even as she would have arisen to go and warn him of the danger came a recognition of the fact that she did not know where he was to be found, but only that he was away somewhere making speeches; and she sank back in her seat with a feeling that she could do nothing; and the tears welled up to her eyes at the thought of the situation and her own inability to be of service.

Then some of those within noticed that the door be-

tween the two offices was ajar and came and closed it, after first peeping in to see who was in the outer room. Seeing no one but a young girl sitting at her desk with bowed head as if at work, he closed the door without comment, and thereafter nothing was distinguishable by the one occupant of the outer office except an occasional indistinct murmur of voices from the inner room.

And Jennie Mason sat at her desk and made an effort to resume her work; trying to think what she should do with the information she had thus surreptitiously gained.

She could not warn Mr. Swanson; should she tell her father what she knew?

Ought she not to hunt up Mr. Nixon and inform him, and get him to find Mr. Swanson?

She decided that she would do this; or at least she would tell her father, and then if he thought best, she would find Mr. Nixon and tell him. And she wondered whether she dared leave at once and without permission from her employer to go upon this mission. Before she could decide, the conference in the private office broke up, and the parties to it—except Mr. Hardiman—passed through the room where she was with no more than a glance in her direction, and departed by the street entrance.

Then a moment later Mr. Hardiman himself appeared and gave her some orders regarding the work she was doing; keeping his eyes upon her, while addressing her, in a way that made her feel uneasy for fear he suspected her of having overheard what had passed between himself and those who had just left, and was seeking to judge of what she intended doing with the information she had thus gained. This prevented her from daring to ask leave of absence for the remainder of the afternoon.

And so she sat and worked away with a nervous energy, that if it enabled her to accomplish an unusual amount of work in a short time, did not fail of observation by the keen eyes of her employer, who took his seat and remained in it at a desk only a few feet away, apparently absorbed in looking over his correspondence; but not in fact so much so as not to be observant of the actions and manners of his pretty secretary, his treatment of whom had always been respectful, though sometimes colored with a slight effort at familiarity, which had for the moment disquieted its recipient.

Slowly the remaining hours of the afternoon wore away; and with the first stroke of the clock that announced the time of her release from work for the day, Miss Mason arose, hurriedly arranged her papers in something like order, and taking up her sun-hat and the light wrap she sometimes needed on her way home, hastened to leave the office and walked rapidly away. In her eagerness to reach home she made little short cuts across corners in passing from one side of the street to the other, and when arrived at the gate she ran up the walk and up the steps into the house and began looking from room to room for her father whom she finally discovered sitting under the grape arbor in the garden and with him Mr. Nixon.

"Oh, Mr. Nixon," she exclaimed, coming hurriedly into their presence, "I am so glad you are here. You must go and find Mr. Swanson at once and tell him they are going to do something to try and beat him; and if he don't go to Washington instantly and get something done that Mr. Hardiman wants done he will make all the men in his shops vote against him."

"That is exactly in keeping with Mr. Hardiman's

character," remarked Mr. Mason. "But how came you to know about it, daughter?"

"I overheard Mr. Hardiman tell some gentlemen who came to his private office this afternoon. They forgot to close the door between the two rooms and I could not help but overhear; though at first I tried not to do so."

Jennie blushed slightly as she admitted to having gained her information thus surreptitiously, and glanced from her father to Mr. Nixon as if to ask them for assurance of having acted honorably.

"I don't see how you could avoid hearing, nor why, really, you should have sought to do so when you had discovered the character of the conversation," returned Mr. Nixon. "If these men were conspiring to do a wrong to Mr. Swanson or the working-men, I think it was clearly your duty to listen, that if possible, we may prevent its accomplishment. But did you learn what it is they want Mr. Swanson to do?"

The girl thanked him with her eyes for having reassured her of not acting dishonorably as she answered:

"No; at least I don't think I understand it very well. From what I heard I gathered that Mr. Hardiman wants to get his paper through the mails at less cost than he is now doing; something about postage I think; I know he said something like that. And he said Mr. Swanson or somebody had got to get the authorities at Washington to let him do as he wanted or he would vote all his employes against the whole state ticket. The other men were trying to pursuade him not to do it; but he declared he would, and I believe he will; and I think Mr. Nixon ought to find Mr. Swanson and tell him about it and urge him to do as Mr. Hardiman wishes; don't you, papa?"

"I should know better about that, if I knew positively what it is Mr. Hardiman wants him to do," replied Mr. Mason. "I know enough of Mr. Hardiman to believe him capable of fulfilling his threat about voting his men; and I do not doubt he will compel them to vote as he wishes, whichever ticket that may be. Times are getting harder every day; a good many manufacturers throughout the country are shutting down, and the men will vote any ticket Hardiman may order them to rather than lose their jobs; and our organization is not strong enough to prevent it. I wish it were, but it isn't."

"I am perfectly willing to go and find Mr. Swanson—if it is thought best—and tell him as nearly as I can what's up," said Nixon. "I can find out by the *Daily Chronicle* where he is speaking to-day and where he will be to-morrow."

"And you will urge him to try and do what Mr. Hardiman demands wont you?" said Miss Mason earnestly. "He will be defeated if you do not?"

"I don't wish to see Mr. Swanson defeated," returned Nixon, a little slowly and very soberly, "and shall be glad to be of any assistance in promoting his election. I wish we knew a little more certainly what it is Hardiman demands. We should know better then how to act."

"Do you suppose Mr. Hardiman would tell you if you went to him?" suggested Jennie.

Nixon shook his head in a manner evincing doubt.

"I think," he said, "that it is something he does not wish many people to know. From what you say, he was demanding that Swanson or some one else, some of the candidates on the state ticket, go to Washington and get some officer of the government to do, or promise to do something for him, and he made threats in case it

was not done. He would not have done that if it were not something he feared to let any but the few leaders know. I will go and ask him, however, if you wish, but I doubt if it would do any good. And I think, Miss Jennie, that if I were to do so he would guess at once where I got what information I have, which would not be pleasant for you; as, while you have done nothing you ought not to have done, he might think you had, and make it difficult for you to remain in his employ."

"I would rather lose my place than see Mr. Swanson defeated," replied the girl with spirit. Then she added a little hurriedly, "you know Mr. Swanson is the representative of the laboring men and it is our duty to help elect him."

"You would not wish us to advise Mr. Swanson to do a dishonorable thing to secure his election, would you, my daughter? From all you have told us, and from what I know of Mr. Hardiman, I am inclined to think he wants Mr. Swansou to use his influence with somebody at Washington, some officer of the government, to get something done for him that is not strictly honest. I have heard of something similar that occurred two years ago; or rather it was said that the reason Hardiman voted his men as he did, was, that the other side refused or failed to get some favor for him from some official, I think it was a Judge, whom he tried to get to promise to decide a suit he had in court, in his favor. Now if this thing he wants of Mr. Swanson is anything like that, of course Mr. Swanson cannot agree to it; and if he were to, he would not be worthy of our support nor of that of any other honest man."

The girl stood perfectly quiet while her father was speaking; but as he went on, the color rose to her neck and then to her cheeks in a flood of crimson, and she

seemed scarcely able to raise her eyes from the ground when he had ceased.

So absorbing had been her interest in the matter, and so anxious was she to do something to prevent the impending danger to Mr. Swanson and those whom she really felt were to be greatly benefited by his election, that she had not for one moment considered the character of the demand made by Mr. Hardiman except in relation to its effect upon the election.

Now, however, she saw that what her father said was —in all probability—true. Indeed she felt sure that it was; and that she had been urging Mr. Nixon, whom she knew to be the soul of honor, to find Mr. Swanson and advise him to do a dishonorable—perhaps even an unlawful—act; and she was overcome with shame and confusion at the thought.

"I didn't mean,—I never thought,—do you suppose Mr. Hardiman meant anything like that?" she stammered. "You don't think, papa, Mr. Nixon, that I would ask Mr. Swanson—that is—anybody, to do such a thing as that, do you? I didn't know it could be anything like that."

"Of course we don't think you would advise any one to do anything dishonorable, daughter. I didn't mean, and Mr. Nixon didn't mean to accuse you of anything. I was only giving voice to what was not my own suspicions alone, but what I think were Mr. Nixon's also. We know you had no idea of its being anything improper, or you would have told us."

"Of course you would, Miss Jennie," affirmed Nixon. "There is no one in the whole world I would not suspect of doing a mean thing before I would think it of you."

At this compliment, the first she ever remembered to have received from Mr. Nixon, Jennie raised her eyes

just long enough to express her grateful thanks for his good opinion; and then seeing something in his own earnest gaze that spoke strongly of admiration, if not of love, she dropped them again, while once more the blood mounted to her cheek and brow.

"If Jennie is correct about it," began Mr. Mason, "and a demand of some kind is to be made upon Mr. Swanson, of course he must be notified. If we were perfectly sure that she was not mistaken about it, there would be no necessity of our finding Mr. Swanson, as, if they are going to make a demand on him, they must themselves find him before they can do it. If however —as is possible—Jennie did not get the exact facts from what she overheard, and there is a plan to vote Hardiman's men against him without letting him know anything about it, then we ought—of course—to apprise him at once of what is up. And to be on the safe side, I think, Mr. Nixon, you had better do as you suggested,—find out by the papers where he will be to-morrow and either write, or—better still, if you can afford the time and expense—go and see him and tell him all you know. Possibly you could learn something by asking some of the men of his own party at headquarters, or some of his friends. You had best be cautious, however, as you might do more harm than good from not knowing whom to approach."

"I will do so," replied Nixon, "and if I learn nothing that causes me to change my mind, I will leave on the midnight train, going south. I know Swanson is in one of the southern counties of the district, and I will find out where and drop off there to-night and see him first thing in the morning. Good-bye, Miss Jennie, you have done exactly right about the matter, and we will not let Mr. Hardiman defeat us with his trickery, if we can help

it, and I think we can. As soon as I get back I will come directly here and tell you both all I have found out about it."

He held out his hand to the girl, took the one she offered in return, gave it a pressure that seemed to contain an assurance of brotherly devotion, and left the garden.

He went directly down town, and to the headquarters of the party that had given Mr. Swanson his second nomination; but though there were several of the leaders there, including one of those whom Miss Mason had described as being in the private office when Mr. Hardiman made his demands that afternoon, he heard no intimation of anything unusual transpiring or likely to transpire; nor did any question he thought well to put, induce the giving of any information. To a question addressed to the gentleman referred to by Miss Mason, he received a reply that satisfied him that those who knew the facts in the case were determined to keep them to themselves; for when he asked if there was any truth in the rumor that Hardiman would not vote for Swanson, he was told that there was nothing in it whatever; that he—the speaker had seen Mr. Hardiman only that afternoon, and had heard him say positively, though casually, that he should both vote and work for Swanson, and that he had no doubt of his election.

Determined not to fail in any possible duty, he went to his room and read until near midnight, and then walked down to the depot.

The train was not due for some minutes when he arrived, and, weary with his long wait at his room, he commenced pacing up and down the platform; and chancing to be near the end of it when he saw the train

approaching, stood waiting while it slowed up, and as the first coach came opposite him, caught the railing and swung himself onto the platform and entered the cars before they came to a stop.

Taking a seat, he peered out of the window into the semi-darkness of the dimly lighted depot just in time to see Horace Swanson step upon the platform of the sleeping car.

Before he could pass through the car he was into the next one, the train was already in motion; and when he had traversed the length of the train and reached the sleeper, Mr. Swanson was already in the act of turning in. Seeing this, he hesitated a moment, then advanced and touched him on the arm.

"Come into the smoking compartment a moment, please," he said, and himself led the way without another word, and without having spoken Mr. Swanson's name.

Surprised, and not greatly pleased by this unexpected request from one whom he had no thought of seeing, Swanson followed without even stopping to slip on his shoes or his coat and vest.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Swanson, the man of honor, calls Swanson the attorney-at-law to his defense. He proceeds to Washington where he makes some very pleasant acquaintances, and is furnished some information regarding the Washington life of his opponent which he thinks he can use to advantage in certain circles at home. He returns in good spirits and re-enters the canvass.

Entering the smoking compartment of the sleeping car, and finding it vacant, Nixon turned to Swanson who had followed, and said:

"I do not know—in fact seeing you here—I do not believe that I have anything new to communicate to you, Mr. Swanson, but I supposed I had when I came down to take the train in search of you. I was already on the train when you entered, having jumped on the first coach at the further end of the depot and did not see you in time to speak to you before you got on; nor did the train stop long enough if I had. What I was seeking you to say, is in reference to a matter in which Mr. Hardiman is interested. If you are already informed about it I need say nothing more."

"Yes I have been fully posted and am now on my way to try and fix things to Hardiman's satisfaction," replied Swanson, thrown a little off his guard by Nixon's evident knowledge of the matter, and not stopping to consider whether or not he would approve of the mission he was on. "But how in the world did you come to know about it? I was told that the whole matter was a secret

between Hardiman and the few gentlemen whom I met to-night, and myself. If the thing has become public I might as well spare myself the trip and get out of the race for Congress at once, for if Old Hardiman does as he threatens, I will be snowed under by five hundred majority at the least,"

"Miss Mason overheard Mr. Hardiman when he was making known his demands to some of your friends," replied Mr. Nixon, "and came to us—that is to her father and me with it. It has gone no further yet, and I do not know that it need. I acknowledge, however, that if Miss Mason has the right of it I do not see how you can accomplish what he asks."

"I shall have help," returned Swanson, "and it has to be done. I don't like it, but we can't afford to refuse, as there is no doubt that Hardiman will vote everyone of his men against us if we do not do as he demands, and that means certain defeat. Of course it is outrageous in him to ask it, but we cannot afford to be beaten now. It is but two weeks to election and if we can hold the labor vote as it now stands pledged, I am certain of being elected. You do not greatly disapprove of what I am going to do, do you?" he queried a little uneasily, for he noticed an expression upon Nixon's face which was not altogether one of approval to say the least.

"It is certain defeat to refuse," he continued, "I thought you were as anxious for my election as anybody, since I am the candidate of the Labor men."

"I certainly desire your election," replied Nixon, "though to be frank with you I do not any longer anticipate any great good to come to the laboring people from it. This is not altogether, perhaps not in any degree, your fault, but is the result of conditions which I did not

foresee when I asked you to become our candidate, and I am as I say, still anxious to see you elected, though more because others desire it than because I think you can do the laboring men any good. But as I understand it, the demands which Mr. Hardiman is making involves something very near asking a violation of the law. Is this not so?"

Swanson flushed.

"No, it is not a violation of the law, Mr. Hardiman asks, but a ruling under a law; one that the Post-office Department has the right to pass upon, and which it has passed upon, but in a way not satisfactory to Mr. Hardiman. What he now asks is that we obtain a reversal of that ruling so that his paper may go through the mails at pound rates, instead of, as now, compeling him to pay one cent on each paper. It is really a hardship to Mr. Hardiman to have to pay so much money for postage, and detracts very largely from his profits, and so compels him to pay less wages than he otherwise might do. I should think you laboring men would feel interested in that, and desirous of seeing Mr. Hardiman get what he is asking for. In fact, in undertaking this mission, I felt that I was doing a favor to the laboring men, aside from any interest they may have in my election."

It was Swanson, the attorney, who was speaking now; the man trained to defend the cause he had been paid to defend.

Swanson, the man of honor, felt himself on trial before himself and before Nixon, and he instinctively appealed to Swanson, the attorney-at-law, who stepped at once into the case and argued it with all the skill of a mind trained to make the worse appear the better cause.

In his eagerness to clear his client, he did not hesitate to defend as proper, and even laudible, the acts of Mr.

Hardiman which only a moment before he had denounced as outrageous, and he would have continued his defense at greater length but that Nixon stopped him.

"It is not necessary to argue the case," he said, "I am not a politician, but I have learned enough of politics already since this campaign opened to convince me anew, that, until the masses of the people are better educated upon questions affecting their interests, they cannot expect relief; and that under existing conditions, victory at the polls is not to the side which is most afraid of violating the moral law. For the present I have only this to say: As I now see it, no good could come to any one from any exposure which I might make of what you are about to undertake, and you may therefore rely upon my silence regarding it."

"Thank you," replied Swanson, who really felt greatly relieved at hearing Nixon so declare. "I am sure you will think about this as I do when you study it over a little more.

"Of course I wish we did not have it to do, but what can we do? The opposition is doing things just as bad and worse. Why they have been running men in from another state for more than a month, in order to vote them at the coming election, and will likely defeat our state ticket with the votes of men who do not live in the state, and who will leave it the day after election, if they get sober enough to travel.

"Politics is a dirty mess any way, and sometimes I wish I had never accepted either nomination; but I am in for it now and being in I mean to win if I can honorably, and there really is nothing dishonorable in asking that a case be re-opened and a new ruling made upon it. It is done in our courts every day and I do not doubt is

a very common thing in the Postoffice department at Washington."

"I will do as I have said, Mr. Swanson. So far as I am concerned you need not fear anything leaking out, and I presume you can depend upon Miss Mason and her father."

"I am sure of it, I am sure Miss Mason will not do anything to injure my chances for election, She and I are friends and she has always seemed to be greatly interested in my race as the candidate of the laboring men. However, you had best tell her and her father of your own intention of saying nothing and advise them to be cautious. A slip of the tongue from either might cause trouble."

"I will tell them what you say, Mr. Swanson. Good night. I am going back to the front car and shall drop off at the next station and return on the early train in the morning."

"Good night, Mr. Nixon, I am a thousand times obliged to you for your intended effort to find and make me acquainted with this matter, and if there is anything I can do for you at any time in the future I shall do it gladly, believe me, and I hope you will do your best to hold your men together on election day."

He grasped Mr. Nixon's hand and shook it warmly, receiving a less cordial pressure in return.

Nixon returned to his former seat in the front car, and, as he had suggested, dropped off at the first stop the train made, sought out a respectable second-class hotel and went to bed after giving orders to be called in time for the train that passed going Smithville way at about sunrise.

Horace Swanson returned to his berth in the sleeper and turned in, but he no longer felt disposed to sleep.

He was worried and out of humor. And the thought that worried him most, was in connection with the Masons. "What will Jennie think of it and me," was the question which kept recurring to him.

He was not in love with her, he was sure of that; yet he felt that he was interested in her in a way that made what she thought of his acts of interest to him, and he feared, in fact knew, that in her pure heart he would be judged to have done a dishonorable thing.

"It can't be helped now," he said mentally at last. "It is too late to back out if I wanted to; and politics are politics anyway. I am in it and I am going to see it through."

He turned over, adjusted his blanket and pillow to suit him and dropped off into sleep that lasted until the porter called him just before reaching Crosstown where he left the car.

Here he found the messenger awaiting him who had been sent to obtain a letter from the candidate for governor, received the desired epistle, and in another hour was again upon his journey. In a few days later he was once more upon the stump in his own district, urging the voters to rally and stand firm for the candidates of the party of Respectability and Great Moral Ideas.

He was in the best of spirits and seemed confident of his election.

He was confident.

He had succeeded fully in his mission at Washington, and with the certainty of receiving the votes of Hardiman's five hundred employees, together with such of the unemployed laborers, and those who worked by the day, as were inside the labor organizations and would be controlled by them, he felt that he was already about as good as elected.

His trip to the National Capital had been, on the whole, a very pleasant one.

Besides having accomplished the business on which he had been sent, he had made a very pleasant acquaintance in the person of the Assistant Post-Master General, and had by him been introduced to several politicians of National reputation, who had assured him that they took a great deal of interest in the contest in his district and should be most happy to hear of his election to Congress to succeed the present member, who was not only of the opposition party, but who they declared was, "if not actually corrupt, at least not so square as he should be." And they proceeded to inform Mr. Swanson of several ugly rumors affecting the man's—his opponent's—private character, which, he told himself, he could use to good advantage in certain circles at home, if necessary, in order to offset any attacks that might be made upon him in case anything relative to his trip to Washington should leak out.

Taken altogether he felt the few hours he had spent in the Capitol City were well spent, and he had lost nothing by the trip, especialy, as he was told on his return, that Brown, who had been filling his appointments during his absence, had done good work in arousing the farmers to an increased interest in the coming election, and upon the right side.

And beside all this he had thought of a scheme by which he could, in a measure at least, even things up with Hardiman, and at the same time do a favor for the Mason's, that ought, so he told himself, to reestablish him in their estimation, if, as he felt was the case, he had fallen from the high pedestal upon which, in Miss Jennie's eyes, if not in those of her father also, he knew he had formerly stood.

"It will serve the old rascal exactly right," he mentally commented, as he thought the matter out while whirling along in the cars toward home. "I shall not be beholden to him after election, in either case. If I am elected I can afford to defy him, and if defeated, I shall have nothing further to lose. I'll do it, if only to teach him others can play at bluff as well as he. It will be a good joke to hoist the old fellow on his own petard, and I'll do it just as sure as shooting."

* * * * * * *

Nixon met Jennie Mason on the street as she was going to the office on the morning of his return after his interview on the cars with Swanson, and told her of having seen him. He did not tell her all that had passed between them but that Swanson was fully apprised of what was on foot and was on his way to Washington to try and obtain that which was demanded by Mr. Hardiman.

Jennie did not ask what it was he was to obtain at Washington, and Nixon did not volunteer any information upon that point; but she felt it was something not altogether right, and that Nixon knew it and refrained from telling her because he did not wish to be Mr. Swanson's accuser.

She felt relieved however when Nixon told her that he intended still to vote for Mr. Swanson, repeating also what that gentleman had said about keeping what they knew to themselves.

Their conversation occupied but a few moments as the street was not the place for it, and besides Jennie had to be at the desk in Mr. Hardiman's office at a certain hour now nearly arrived; and Nixon, now that he could do so, wished to be at his place in the shop at quartering time, and so lose but a fourth of a day.

Accordingly they separated after the hasty explanation already recorded, and Jennie went directly to her work, while Nixon repaired first to his room to change the clothes he had on for those which he wore in the shop.

Mr. Hardiman said nothing to Miss Mason directly regarding what she knew of the conference held in his office the day before, but he made several remarks and asked one or two questions which she felt were intended to draw out what she knew, if anything. These she parried as best she could, and tried by close attention to her work to prevent their being continued. Nevertheless, she felt that her manner betrayed her secret and she was nervous and miserable in consequence.

However, as nothing further was said during the days that followed, she ceased to think much about it; entirely so when a little later she learned through Mr. Nixon, that Mr. Swanson had returned and was again engaged in the canvass in his district.

CHAPTER XIII.

The election. The Chronicle and the Bugle disagree regarding the returns. Swanson's election finally conceded. He is called on for a speech. He responds to the call and makes a speech. After which the author of this narrative forgets himself and moralizes a little.

"Hip! Hip! Hurrah!"

"The people again Triumphant."

"Swanson Elected by Six Hundred Majority."

"We carry nearly every County in the District."

"And elect a Majority of both Houses of the Legislature."

"The state ticket still in doubt, but returns, so far as received, indicate a clean sweep of the state."

The above headlines, spreading over the greater part of a column, appeared in the Smithville *Chronicle* on the morning after the election, and were read by eager groups of men in the hotel, the saloons and upon the street corners, and wherever men congregated. And everywhere the reading was greeted with cheers and yells of delight.

Not that everybody cheered, for everybody did not.

Naturally there were those who did not relish the news as given by the *Chronicle*, nor the cheering; but these kept, for the most part, a little out of the way of the noisiest of the crowds, and when appealed to, declared that those laughed best who laughed last, and that they

could afford to wait for fuller returns, which, they had no doubt, would show quite a different condition of affairs.

In fact the *Bugle*, which had—so its editor declared in a double leaded editorial—private advices from the most reliable sources, disputed the claims put forward by the *Chronicle*, and asserted that so far from carrying everything, the party that the *Chronicle* represented had actually lost two, if not three congressmen, and the lower house of the state legislature, if not the senate also.

The *Bugle* further claimed the state ticket for its own party by a majority that would certainly reach ten thousand, and might be double that.

"Indeed," it asserted, "the returns now coming in from the back townships indicate that it will reach fully the latter figures, and may even exceed it."

"As for this district," the article continued, "Mr. Swanson appears, upon the face of the returns received, to be elected by a small majority; but this majority may disappear when the returns are all in. It may quite likely require the official count to decide."

"But," it added, "there are charges which appear well authenticated, not only of bulldozing, but of illegal voting, by men in Mr. Swanson's interest, at a number of polling places, both here and in other towns and cities and at some of the country precincts; and if these are investigated, as they should and no doubt will be, enough illegal votes can easily be found to change the present footings and elect our candidate by a handsome majority."

During the entire day the interest and excitement continued, and was fed by hourly issues of both the *Bugle* and the *Chronicle*, containing latest advices from the headquarters of their respective parties at the State

Capital, or special telegrams from local politicians and candidates in the different sections of the state; and as each bit of news, favorable to this side or that one, was made known, the cheers were repeated by groups of men of opposite political sympathies, first one and then the other being elated or depressed by the conflicting reports.

As the day advanced, however, the cheers began to come most frequently from those who were most silent in the earlier hours, while looks of disappointment and chagrin were noticable upon the faces of many who were merriest in the morning.

Appearances seemed to indicate that they had said well, who said, "He laughs best who laughs last."

Unofficial returns from the principle cities and towns of the state, and from those counties lying along the lines of railroad, were all in by noon, and upon these both parties were practically agreed, the difference in the two counts being trifling, the total as received leaving the ticket of which the *Chronicle* was the supporter, a couple of thousands ahead.

But as usual the returns from the back townships were slow in coming in, and as these were the strongholds of the party that the *Bugle* espoused, those who stood with it felt confident yet of being victors; while the *Chronicle* folks feared, although they denied their danger, from this source.

And not without reason did the one hope and the other fear; for as these returns came scattering in, their character was something of a surprise to both parties; for, after cutting down the majority of two thousand, claimed by the *Chronicle* for its state ticket, to one thousand, then to five hundred, and then to nothing, it began piling it up upon the other side. And this majority grew as

precinct after precinct and county after county was heard from, until something near ten thousand was reached and there it stopped, and the returns were declared all in; and the *Bugle* crowd went wild and yelled itself hoarse shouting over their victory in the state; while the *Chronicle* crowd gathered in front of the Eagle Hotel and crowed over their victory in the county and district, and demanded a speech from Swanson, whose election was now conceded, and who had been saved from defeat by the vote of Hardiman's men; his majority being just a trifle less than five hundred, which was almost the exact number of the voters employed in Hardiman's shops.

In response to their calls, Swanson again appeared upon the balcony of the hotel; and again there were present the local bosses of the party that claimed him.

Peters, too, there being no procession of laboring men for him to appear conspicuous among, crowded upon the balcony and was allowed to sit where he could be seen by the crowd below.

Other less shining lights among the labor leaders were also allowed to appear among the bosses upon the balcony, although not given the most conspicuous seats. They had been of use in the campaign and this was their reward,—permission to sit for an hour in the company of the recognized leaders of the party of Respectability and thus have reflected upon them, as it were, some of the aforesaid respectability, and also to share in the adulation which the crowd below was bestowing upon those above.

It could not hurt the bosses—this permitting the labor leaders to appear among them for once.

To-morrow they will return to their work and nothing more will be seen or heard of them until a few weeks or months before the next election, when they will again be

shown some little courtesies for a time and urged to "help hold your fellow laborers in the ranks of the Grand Old Party of Respectability and High Moral Ideas."

Swanson was introduced to the yelling crowd by one of the bosses as "Congressman" Swanson, which allusion to the result of the election caused the wildest cheering.

When this had died away, Swanson spoke.

He was in high spirits, and spoke in fervid tones and a ringing voice, that, of itself, was enough to delight a crowd such as was before him.

He congratulated them upon the great victory they had won in the district. A victory which he declared was due to the intelligent and united action of the laboring men, who had thus shown to the world that they were capable of standing together in their own interests, and in support of true principles of government; and he expressed the hope that the day was not far distant when other laboring men, in other sections of the state and in other states, would emulate their example and win other and still greater victories.

"The loss of the state, if it be true that it is lost to us," he continued, "is due solely to the fact that in other portions of the state the laboring men were not aroused, and failed to take the same intelligent action you have taken; or being aroused, have been deceived by the misstatement of facts and the false reasoning of the opposition party into voting with them, in antagonism to their own best interests."

The crowd of working men below cheered lustily; and thus encouraged, Swanson continued by declaring it to be his firm belief that the time was near at hand when the laborers of the entire country "would have become

sufficiently intelligent to make it impossible for demagogues to longer deceive any considerable portion of their numbers into voting with a party whose record proved it to be incompetent, vascillating and treasonable."

And again the crowd of workingmen cheered, and after thanking them for the confidence in him exhibited in having selected him from the many able men who surrounded him, to represent the district in the halls of National legislation, and promising to be true to the trust thus imposed, and guard with equal care the interests of all classes, he sat down amidst cheers from the crowd below and the clapping of hands from those about him in the gallery.

If it occurred to Swanson that there was anything grotesque in the idea of congratulating the laboring men upon their "intelligent" hanging together in a canvass that had resulted in his election, he dismissed it without consideration.

He knew, of course, that the intelligence exhibited by them had been of an entirely negative quality, since they had voted almost to a man, either under the quietly exercised authority of Hardiman and others like him, or had gone with the crowd without any effort to understand the issues of the campaign, other than an occasional attendance upon a rally of their own party; going solely for the purpose of enjoying the excitement of the hour and to help swell the crowd in opposition to "the other fellows;" cheering when others started the cheers, and returning to work the next day with no increase of knowledge beyond the fact that some man of their party had made a speech and that they had helped to applaud it.

Swanson had taught them nothing in his campaign. He knew very little of their condition or the causes for

it when he was nominated, and not knowing their condition and needs could not know the remedy. Since his nomination and during the canvass he had been surrounded by men and influences that were not calculated to draw him near the people but away from them; while his interviews with men like Peters who were allowed to stand as the representatives of the labor organizations, were not calculated to increase his respect for laboring men generally.

True there were Nixon and Mr. Mason whom he respected and whom he knew to be both honest and thoroughly informed; but then they had no considerable following; and once nominated, the desire to be elected overbalanced the inspiration to be of use to the laborers, since this inspiration was not backed either by any positive knowledge of their condition, or of the cause or remedy for the evils of which they complained; and was, moreover, in a degree at least, stifled by the apathy of the laborers themselves, who were too indolent mentally, to apply themselves to the study of the cause and remedy for these evils, and so permitted any of their number to stand as their representative who had the requisite amount of cheek to claim, and sufficient command of language to publicly assert his claim to be such.

He had begun by complimenting them on their intelligence, and they had cheered. He learned that they had no intelligent conception of any public question.

He spoke of glorious liberty and the freedom which had descended from revolutionary sires to noble sons, and again they cheered and said nothing of the fact that they had sold their liberties with their labor and voted as they were bidden by whomsoever gave them employment and bread.

He talked of honor, and of justice in politics, and found at his side a representative of the workingmen tempting him to dishonor and injustice.

Is it any wonder that the feelings of a naturally sympathetic nature which found expression in such language as first caused Horace Swanson to be looked upon as a friend of the laboring men never became anything more; never took practical shape; never grew into anything stronger or better than a feeling of sympathy, as easily laid aside as aroused, for a class of men and women who appeared, upon the whole, to be pretty well contented with their lot; or if not that, too apathetic to make any great effort to understand the cause or apply the remedy for the wrongs they complained of; and so, perhaps, not so much wronged after all?

The apathy of the laboring men has ever been the one insurmountable obstacle in the way of establishing justice upon the throne of government.

I have seen a thousand, five thousand, laboring men carrying torches in a procession organized for the publicly avowed purpose of arousing their enthusiasm as a cheaper means of getting their votes than that of making clear to them the issues involved in the contest, or with the openly declared object of preventing them from listening to the arguments of the opposition party; and I have seen the wildest demonstrations of delight over a political victory, by men who ought to have known, and would have known had they preferred a little mental effort and liberty, to mental indolence and serfdom, that it was a victory over them and not for them; a victory of those who neither sought nor intended, to do them justice.

A civilization which begets thousands of men with brains and sympathies too inoperative to act in defense

of their own rights and the rights of their fellow laborers will beget scores of Swansons with intellects and sympathies sufficiently more active to incite to action in defense of their own individual rights and the satisfaction of their own personal desires, but not enough so to compel them to defend the rights of others—least of all to defend those who will not act in their own defense.

It is only the highest organization of brain and heart that impels to action first for the race and second for self; and of these few only the supremely high are still impelled to continue working for the good of the masses when they find that the masses prefer laboring with their bodies for others, to working with their brains for themselves.

There are many Horace Swansons in Congress. In fact Congress is largely made up of Swansons,—of men of naturally warm feelings, ready sympathies and genial natures.

Such men are popular at home, hence influential. Elected to Congress, they as readily respond to the influences thrown about them by the hard headed, hard hearted and scheming few, as to the feelings of neighborliness with those at home which gave them their popularity. And seeing the apathy of the masses and their apparent preference for a party victory, to a victory for principles of equity, justice and honor they readily and surely drift away from the people and become mere politicians, without principles and with no ambition to benefit their fellows, but only to retain their popularity, increase the circle of their influence and enjoy in their own persons the pleasures and comforts which influence and position give.

The few who occupy the highest plane may look down

upon such with condemnation and may shout to the masses to brush them aside and put patriots and statesmen in their places, and may even get an occasional response of cheers from the crowd but nothing else will follow. No permanent good can come to the masses until they learn to discriminate between parties and principles; and this will not be until they have educated their brains to think as well as their hands to work.

No machine will ever run itself, or be benefited by its own labor. Except the oil which prevents its parts from wearing out too rapidly all that it adds to the wealth of the country will go to the man who runs it.

If the laboring men continue to be machines other men will continue to run them, and the oil which prevents them from creaking is all they will retain of the wealth which they create.

CHAPTER XIV.

Doctor calls to congratulate his noble friend on his election. Mr. Peters also calls and demands that his services in holding the labor vote solid for Swanson be suitably rewarded—which reminds that gentleman that he has promised himself to even things up a little with Mr. Hardiman.

As soon as the crowd in front of the hotel had dispersed, Mr. Swanson watched his opportunity to slip unnoticed from those within, and directed his steps toward his private office.

Now that the excitement was over he began to feel the need of rest; and was, besides, anxious to be alone that he might think over the change in his prospects in life, and realize just what they were, and what it really was that had occurred to him.

Arriving there, he found Doctor sitting on the steps and waiting for his coming, as on a former occasion referred to in this history of men and events. He welcomed him heartily, for he knew that here was a person whose interest in him was wholely disinterested; here was a loyal heart that rejoiced in his good fortune without one pang of jealousy or one selfish feeling; and recognizing this, he recognized also, though without exactly saying it, even mentally, that of all who had surrounded him during the days and weeks of the campaign, few—if any—but had some selfish motive back of the work they had done to secure his election; and that love for themselves, and not for him, had prompted them to act.

But Doctor had worked entirely without selfish motives, and had worked hard.

Swanson had heard of him frequently, though he had not seen him since the occasion last mentioned in this narrative. He knew that Doctor had been down among the poorest of the poor, sounding his praises, and urging the women to work and the men to vote for him; and though he had, on one or two occasions, felt a bit annoyed when certain of his friends had chaffed him about "this champion of his," "this Daniel Webster," "this Cicero," "this Demosthenes," whom they laughingly asserted he "had employed to argue his case before the people," he yet could not put away the feeling of gratitude for such devotion to himself, and to the cause which Doctor fully, and he himself partly, believed he had espoused.

"I didn't come to ask you to let me stay all night, Mr. Swanson," said Doctor, when that gentleman had taken him by the hand and was shaking it with his right while inserting the key in the lock with his left one, "I didn't come to stay all night, but just to say how glad I am, for your sake and the sake of the poor folks, that you are elected. I didn't want to come about bothering you while you were so busy, so awful busy as I knew you must be while the campaign was going on, but now it's over, I wanted you to know I hadn't forgot, and that I did all I could for you; and I saw a good many folks and talked with them about you. Every body I could hear of that had ever bought a bottle of my medicine and it had done them good, I went and saw them and told them about you, and how you were for the poor man as much as for the rich, and tried to get them to vote for you. I knew if they had been cured by my

medicine they wouldn't refuse to let me talk to them, and I think I really did do some good."

"Of course you did. Made me lots of votes. I heard about you often while I was going around over the district. But see here Doctor, you are not going to leave at this time of night. I sha'n't hear to it. You must come in and stay all night with me; no, I won't let you off, come right along in." And Swanson fairly pulled Doctor in and locked the door afterwards. Then he said, laughing:

"You can't get out, so you will have to stay; there are plenty of blankets in the closet, in my room, as you know, and you can sleep on the lounge as you used to when you came often, and didn't appear quite so afraid of permitting your friends to do you a trifling favor."

And Swanson proceeded to light a lamp, using the same match to light a cigar that he had put in his mouth before leaving the hotel but had forgotten to light sooner.

He understood Doctor probably better than any one else, and appreciated his devotion to himself. He knew quite as well as Doctor did, that his refusal to stay had arisen from a fear that he—Swanson—would think that he—Doctor—had come—not to express his gratification at the result of the election—but instead, to get a night's lodging free, hence the decided manner in which he insisted on his remaining.

Doctor understood also why Swanson was thus insistant, and his simple heart was filled with unutterable bliss at this new evidence of the goodness of the man he so loved and admired, and who alone, of all men, seemed best to understand and appreciate him.

He had been in the crowd in front of the Eagle Hotel, or upon the outskirts of it, and had heard Swanson's

speech, and believed a great deal more of it than Swanson did; in fact, believed it all, or at least believed that Swanson believed it all; believed that Swanson believed the laboring men—including Hardiman's hands—had voted for him because he had been first nominated by the laboring men; although he, himself, knew, from mingling with them, that they had no choice, and had voted as Hardiman directed, without much thought or care about the matter.

He had no idea that Swanson knew of this. He believed that Swanson was so pure and noble that it was not possible for any one to approach him with propositions not wholly honorable; and the fact coming to his knowledge that Hardiman had signified to his employes that he wished Swanson elected, had rather warmed his heart toward Hardiman, whom he felt must be about becoming a better man, since he was in favor of electing so good a man to office.

If anybody had told him Mr. Swanson had conspired to induce Hardiman to vote his men for him, willy nilly, whether they they wished to vote for him or not, and that to secure this end he had bribed a government officer with promises, he would not have believed it. He would have turned from one who made such assertions with feelings of pity and sorrow, that anyone should, through ignorance or prejudice, do a wrong of so grievous a nature to the noblest man living.

So Doctor slept on the lounge in Swanson's office that night, and even permitted his friend to bring him a breakfast from the hotel; something he had never consented to before, although it had sometimes been offered.

To go to the hotel for breakfast himself, he did not dare; his shrinking nature making the thought of facing so many people at meal time a torture to be avoided at

any cost, even that of extreme hunger. But now he permitted Swanson to bring him something in a basket, which the landlady at the Eagle filled most willingly, when told, aside and laughingly, that it was for Doctor, "who—poor devil—thinks I am about the greatest man in the world, but is so bashful that he would probably starve before he would come to the hotel and eat with all your guests."

Returning to his office, as in going from it to the hotel for breakfast, everybody Swanson met had to shake hands and congratulate him on his successful race for Congress; a few of his more intimate friends attempted to guy him about the basket he carried, wishing to know if he had started to Washington already, and on foot; and similar attempts at pleasantries, all of which he good-naturedly parried, and continued his walk.

Arriving at the office, he found that Doctor had very carefully swept the rooms, which had been neglected of late, had replaced the books in their proper positions on the shelves, made the bed, and put things generally in an orderly condition; for which Swanson thanked him, though telling him he ought not to have taken so much trouble upon himself.

Doctor took his basket of food and a chair to one of the windows, turned his back to the center of the room and ate a heartier and a better meal than he had tasted before in many a day. The motherly soul of the landlady of the Eagle had not stinted either the quality or quantity of the breakfast she had put up, and Doctor was hungry.

As others began to drop in to congratulate the newly elected congressman, Doctor quietly slipped out unobserved, and it was weeks before Swanson saw anything more of his humble friend.

Then he came again, spent the night upon the sofa in the office, said a few words to prove his continued loyalty to his friend and the cause of the poor, as before, and again slipped away unperceived, to repeat the coming and going, at intervals of weeks or months, until Swanson departed for Washington to enter upon his new duties as a member of the Congress of the United States.

Among the earliest of Horace Swanson's callers, on the morning referred to in this chapter, the one on which he brought Doctor his breakfast from the hotel, was Mr. Peters, the representative of the labor organization. He had tried hard to get a word privately with the newly elected congressman the afternoon and evening before, but had seen no good opportunity, as Swanson was either out of sight or surrounded by others whom Peters recognized as his superiors in a political, military sense, and hence did not dare interrupt with a request for a private audience.

Now, however, he was on hand, determined to see his man, and demand that his services in the campaign which had been so successful in the county and district be recognized as they deserved.

Finding Swanson alone for the moment, he made the object of his coming known with little delay and few words.

He claimed the credit of having held the workingmen solidly together for Swanson and the county ticket, and demanded a position of some sort that would recompense him for his lost time and the work he had done and influence exerted; and he expected Mr. Swanson, if he could not himself give him such a position off hand, to use his influence with those who could, to secure it for him.

"But Mr. Peters," returned Swanson, "I paid you for

your time, you know, the same wages you were getting in the shop, and I am told also that the county central committee gave you money at various times. It seems to me you have already been paid pretty well for your time."

"If you call that pay" returned Peters, contemptuously, "there are some others as have had their pay too; but I don't reckon they are satisfied, or going to be, without something more. Folks that have influence don't work in politics for just a bare living, Mr. Swanson; they want something better than day wages. If that is all they are to get, why they might as well stick to the shop and the factory, for they get that there. No sir, its influence that counts, and them that has influence is going to use it where it will bring 'em something better than day wages in a factory. You didn't suppose I was workin' just for the triflin' sum you paid me, did you? That was just to enable me to keep goin' like; so I shouldn't be obliged to quit and let the men scatter and half of 'em vote for somebody besides our ticket. I reckon you don't deny I did it, do you, Mr. Swanson? You recognize the fact that the laboring men voted for you solid, don't you? Well, aint I the leader of the workingmen; president of the organization; and didn't they do as I said? Come, Mr. Swanson, you know they did. Where'd you have been if I hadn't held 'em solid for you? And where'd you be next time, if I should turn them against you?"

Swanson felt both amused and disgusted with the assumption on Peters' part that he had held the labor men solid. Remembering the hasty call from the canvass, his hastier trip to Washington and what the trip was taken for, he realized of how little use Peters had been to him or to anybody and felt half inclined to tell

him that he had already been paid double his worth, and that for his part he would do nothing more for him; but then he remembered that Peters had actually been useful in some ways, and that he might be so again, and that anyway there was no need of offending him; so he replied that he appreciated Mr. Peters' services, remembered that it was he and Nixon who first came to him with the suggestion that he run for Congress as the laboring men's candidate, and promised that he would see what could be done for him.

"Of course, Mr. Peters," he said, "we know what you have done, and I will talk with the other leaders and see what they can do for you. You understand that I have no offices in my gift, but there are some local appointments to be made about the courts and the public institutions, and, perhaps, as a representative laboring man, you will be recognized as entitled to something. You had better see Mr. Black and Mr. White at once, and ask them to secure you what you want."

"The party that recognizes the Workingmen is the party that will get their votes hereafter," replied Peters. "You know that yourself, Mr. Swanson, for where would you have been but for the labor vote? I am sure you see the necessity of giving them the recognition they ask for when they have helped you win the victory."

"And are there others that expect places?" asked Swanson, who began to wonder how much he was going to be annoyed with such men as Peters, demanding to be rewarded for their services in the campaign—a campaign which they declared had been made in the interest of their class.

"Why, yes; I suppose so," returned Peters.

"Though there ain't none that really deserve anything. You see it all depended upon me. I was president of the organization, and I am the only one who made any speeches. The rest of them can't talk much in public, anyway, and so couldn't do much to influence others to vote for you and the rest of the ticket; and anyway, the men all came to me for advice to know what to do. So I don't see that any of the rest are entitled to anything, and I wouldn't give them anything, if I was you. Better give one representative man among them some high position where everybody will know it, and where he will have a chance to exert his influence to advantage in the next election, than to divide things up and give smaller places to each. Of course, if you have the small places to spare to these men, it wouldn't be a bad idea to give 'em to 'em; but I wouldn't cut down the big place any to do it, because they really didn't help much anyway, and it won't make much difference if they do get mad. They can't control any votes, scarcely."

Swanson's growing contempt for Peters, who was evidently interested only in securing a soft place for himself and ready to sacrifice any and all of his comrades, some of whom had really worked honestly and faithfully to bring in scattering votes for Swanson, was so great at this moment that he gave him a square snub by inviting a gentleman of his acquaintance, who entered at the moment, to follow him into his bed-room, under pretense of having something to say to him privately, thus leaving Peters alone in the outer office, and, if his thick skin could be penetrated by a hint, dismissed without further ceremony.

Peters' skin was not so thin, however, as to be thus easily punctured, and when, after fifteen minute's con-

versation upon different subjects, including his own election and Peter's "infernal impudence" as Swanson put it to his friend, they emerged from the room, Peters was still in waiting, and Swanson was obliged to go down town in order to get rid of him.

Of Nixon, Swanson saw nothing—had seen nothing since their meeting on the cars that night the latter started for Washington to get things fixed up so as to satisfy Hardiman. He knew, through others, however, that Nixon had supported him at the polls, though without any show of enthusiasm. He felt that he should like to see Nixon and try and make him more warmly his friend.

In fact, he felt rather in disgrace before Nixon, and although he told himself that he did not know why he should, he yet did feel that he would like to stand well in Nixon's estimation.

He also thought of calling on Jennie Mason, and decided to do so but put it off from day to day, and from Sunday to Sunday, until a month or more had passed and then decided that Miss Mason would feel insulted at his calling to receive her congratulations at so late a day, and so did not go at all.

"I know what I'll do," he said to himself one day, while thinking of the Masons. "I said I would make Old Hardiman even up a bit, and I'll do it, and do it in a way to be of use to Jennie and her crippled father. The old rascal may come back at me two years from now, when I shall be wanting a re-election, but anyway I will take the risk, and what I am going to do may as well be done to-day as any time," and he picked up his hat and started in the direction of Hardiman's office and shops.

"Won't the old fellow squeal though when I put the

screws to him?" he said to himself as he walked along. "I believe I'd do it for the fun of seeing him squirm, if for nothing else," and he smiled as he thought of what he was about to do and how "Old Hardiman" would take it."

CHAPTER XV.

Swanson "evens up" with Mr. Hardiman a little, which appears much to the advantage of Mr. Mason and his pretty daughter, Jennie. Mr. Hardiman "charges it up" to Mr. Swanson; who decides that he will call on Miss Mason at an early day.

It was not until he had nearly reached Hardiman's office that the probability, the almost certainty, of meeting Miss Mason, whom he knew was in Hardiman's employ, occurred to Swanson; but when it did, he stopped short in his walk for a single second and then turned quickly down a side street, intending to walk around a block and thus give himself time to decide what to do. He had not taken a dozen steps in this new direction, however, when he saw Miss Mason enter a notion store just in advance of him, and immediately he turned about and walked rapidly to Hardiman's office.

Entering, he found the bookkeeper at his desk, and inquiring for Mr. Hardiman, was told he was in the inner office; and there he found that gentleman seated and engaged in looking over his month's balance sheet that had just been handed him.

He looked up as Swanson entered and greeted him cordially enough but without rising.

"Good morning, Mr. Swanson," he said, "how do you find yourself this morning? Take a seat." And he waved his hand in the direction of a chair.

Swanson took the chair thus indicated, made a remark or two about the weather, inquired in a casual way if business was brisk, and then said:

"I have called to-day in my character of attorney-at-law, Mr. Hardiman, and on behalf of a client. I presume you surmised as much? Yes? Well, I suppose we may as well come to business at once. The conditions surounding this case are somewhat peculiar, and I recognize the fact that you may think it not one in which I need have permitted myself to be retained, but this I cannot help."

"The truth is," he continued, eyeing Mr. Hardiman closely, "that the reason for my somewhat hasty trip to Washington last Fall in your interest is known to one or two others than those to whom it was intended to be intrusted."

He paused here to give time for his words to take effect, still keeping his eyes fastened on the face of the man opposite him.

If he had expected any evidence of surprise or fright to manifest themselves in Mr. Hardiman's face, however, he was disappointed. That gentleman simply leaned back in his chair; placed the tips of the fingers of the right hand against those of the left, inclined his head in an attitude of rather disinterested attention, and remarked simply:

"Ah?"

"Yes," returned Swanson; "unfortunately, it's a fact," and again he paused.

"Well?"

This from Mr. Hardiman.

"Well," resumed Swanson, "I appear in the interest of those parties."

"I should think you would need to appear in your

own defence rather. If I am correctly informed, you made representations to a certain officer of the government at Washington that would not look well if printed in—the Bugle, for instance."

Swanson laughed; not loudly, but easily and good naturedly.

"There are a good many things, Mr. Hardiman, that wouldn't look well in the Bugle, and that do not need to appear there: things that are too valuable, in fact, to share with the public."

"Yes? I am glad you appreciate the situation. May I ask in what way this conversation and the facts —if they are facts—you alluded to interest me?"

There was a touch of sarcasm in Mr. Hardiman's voice as he asked this that indicated an intention of not yielding too easily to any demand that might be made upon him; and also that he felt that if he were in the mud, his interviewer was quite as deep in the mire; and so not particularly dangerous.

"Certainly, Mr. Hardiman," replied Swanson, "that is exactly what I came for. Did I not tell you, or did I neglect to do so, that I appear for those who are acquainted with the facts in the case, and have come to ask that you consider the propriety of doing them a small favor."

"A favor, eh! Well, what is it?"

"Releasing a small mortgage you hold upon their home."

Again Swanson fastened his eyes on those of his companion, and this time there was a look of determination and a fixity of purpose in the look that was not lost upon the other, although that other gave no indication in any way of being affected by it. He simply rocked himself slightly backward in his office-

chair as at every previous pause in the conversation, lightly pressed his finger-ends together, separated and again touched their tips; and returned the firm gaze of his opponent with one of perfect coolness and apparently moderate interest, as if he listened rather through politeness to matters affecting one for whom he had a friendly feeling only, rather than to what was of great importance to himself.

"Do you know the amount of the mortgage you are expected to secure the release of?" he asked after a pause of a few seconds.

"It is about six hundred dollars, interest and all."

"H'm! Yes. I presume I may ask, without giving offense, the name of the person whose mortgage I am expected to release?"

This was said in the same tone of quiet sarcasm that had characterized most of Mr. Hardiman's conversation during the interview, and indicated that that gentleman was still defiantly confident of his ability to defend himself against any attack Swanson could make, by a counter-charge of being in equal danger of exposure with himself. Both men knew of course that neither had done anything illegal so far as asking for a change in the ruling of the Post-Office Department was concerned. Such requests are of daily occurrence, and are wholly legitimate and proper when the department has acted without sufficient evidence and so made an unfair ruling, or when the paper ruled against has changed its character without changing its name.

The only danger to Swanson lay in the fact that he had asked the department to make a ruling clearly unjust to the government and to other papers; one that gave Hardiman an advantage over rival firms, not contemplated by the law governing the rates of postage

upon purely advertising matter; and that he had done this to influence votes in an election in which he was a candidate, a knowledge of which facts, if made public, would affect his social standing in certain quarters, and might be used against him in any future contest he should make for office.

Hardiman's danger was of a different character. He cared nothing for what people might say, as he had no political or social aspirations, but he did care for the dollars which the late ruling of the department saved him; and he did not want public attention called to the facts in relation to his paper, lest some rival firm with sufficient influence to obtain a reversal of the ruling secured by Swanson, should take the matter up.

He was not yet sufficiently satisfied that Swanson was not playing a purely bluff game, to induce him to offer terms; hence the unconcealed sarcasm of tone and manner with which he asked if he might be permitted to know the name of the party on whose property he was being asked to release a mortgage.

On his part, however, Swanson felt too sure of succeeding with his project to be easily angered, and again he laughed quietly and good humoredly as he replied:

"Oh, certainly; in fact now I think of it, you would have to know, wouldn't you, before you could release it as I request. Well, it is Mr. Joseph Mason, the inventor and possible owner of the royalty on certain machines, some of which I understand you are using."

It was Mr. Hardiman's turn to glance keenly at his companion now, and he gave him a look that sought to read as much as possible of what was passing through his mind, and of what he really knew or suspected about the legal right or wrong involved in the possession of the machines alluded to. As to moral

rights Mr. Hardiman cared little, nothing in fact. But for legal rights that could be enforced in the courts he had a respect proportionate to their financial value.

His keen glance remained fixed on his companion but a second, however; he did not want to arouse any suspicion in Swanson's mind that there really was anything in his suggestion of possible legal rights to the invention, still remaining to Mr. Mason.

After a moment of silence, during which he again swung his body back and forth slightly in his chair and pressed his finger tips together a few times he answered:

"I think I understand you, Mr. Swanson; you intend to marry Miss Mason, and wish me to make her a wedding present of the mortgage on her father's house. Is that it?"

Swanson flushed deeply and answered a little angrily:

"Do you think I wish to profit pecuniarily by the transaction? If so, I assure you, you are mistaken. No; I am not going to marry Miss Mason. If I were, I certainly should not ask what I have asked of you, though it is, in my opinion, a demand for but very imperfect justice; and I will tell you plainly, since plain words seem best suited to both of us, that the reason I do not ask more of you is because I have no way of compelling you to give more. You can better afford to relinquish a mortgage of six hundred dollars that you hold against property scarcely worth the amount of the mortgage, and which mortgage Mr. Mason can never pay, than to lose six thousand by having a ruling of the Post-Office department made against your paper; and I swear to you that if you refuse to surrender the mortgage on Mason's home, I

will personally see to it that the ruling is made and that your paper goes through the mail only at circular postage. I do this because of the belief I have that if the truth could be got at, you owe Mr. Mason not only the amount demanded, but many times as much; and that to compel you to relinquish the mortgage is, as I have said, a simple though very imperfect act of justice."

"You are very disinterested and very quixotic in this whole matter, no doubt," sneered the other, now showing signs of anger also. "If you think Mr. Mason or his pretty daughter have other claims upon me, why don't you strike for bigger money? You are too modest in your demands for one who is so certain of having claims of greater magnitude"

"I may conclude to do so yet," replied Swanson, curtly.

Again there was silence between the two men for a short space, and then Hardiman said:

"If you have decided to induce Mr. Mason to permit you to open up any pretended claim against me growing out of our former relations in the invention of those machines, there is no use talking about a release of the mortgage in connection with the ruling of the post-office department as to the right of the Hoe and Subsoiler to go through the mails at pound rates. If I am to be compelled to fight such a nonsensical claim as that, I certainly shall not supply the sinews of war to my enemy in advance; but on the contrary, shall stand on my legal rights, which are perfect in both cases."

"So far as legal rights go, Mr. Hardiman, I doubt much if Mr. Mason can prove any. I do not think he himself believes he can, though I know he considers

himself deeply injured at your hands. So far as I am concerned, therefore, you can rest assured you will not be troubled in that direction. As for the others you have my ultimatum. You can do as you like; but if you refuse my request I shall certainly do as I said—get the ruling reversed and compel you to suspend the publication of the "Hoe and Subsoiler," or pay one cent per copy for passing it through the mails. I am your debtor for some things, and I will pay my debts if my demand in this matter is not complied with."

"But what guaranty have I that if I surrender the mortgage Mason will keep the matter quiet?"

"The knowledge that he has kept quiet in the past, although acquainted with all the facts from the beginning. Let us understand each other fully, Mr. Hardiman. I am acting in the matter without consulting Mr. Mason; and solely on my own motion, and because of my respect for a crippled man and his daughter to whom I am under obligations, and who are too poor to defend themselves or protect themselves from injustice. In doing so, I am but putting in practise the rules of success that you have taught me—that is to use whatever power I can command to compel other persons to do as I desire them to do."

"Very shrewd in you, I am sure, Mr. Swanson; very shrewd, and proves you to be an able man. You appear to have forgotten one thing, however."

"Possibly; what is it?"

"That you may want my help again two years from now, when you will be a candidate for re-election."

"On the contrary, Mr. Hardiman, I have considered that point carefully, and do not hesitate to say that the probability is I shall want your help at that time, and

if I do, I shall expect to make it to your interest to give it. I have learned by the experience of the last campaign that you are not in the habit of extending help on any other terms; and I judge you to be too good a business man to permit anything that is past to interfere with benefits to come. In plainer words, I expect to pay in the future as in the past for all political favors I may require at your hands. And on the other side, I intend to collect for my friends for what they may do for you. It is a favor to you to keep this matter quiet, and as the Masons are in possession of the facts, I propose you pay them for the favor they have done you and are still doing you in not repeating it to your rivals in business, and thus giving them opportunity to work for a reversal of the ruling obtained by me."

"You are certainly a wise young man in some respects," returned Hardiman, with a dry little laugh, "and you are altogether right in saying that you will pay in the future for any political favors obtained from me. But do I understand that Mr. Mason is unaware of your coming here to-day, and of the object of your visit?"

"Just that. Mr. Mason, as I imagine, kept my visit to Washington, and of its object a secret on account of his friendliness to me. Now I propose that he shall have his reward, and that you who get more out of that affair than any one else, shall do him a little justice and relinquish the mortgage you hold against him. You can make any excuse you choose for doing so: all I ask is that it be done; as to the way of doing, I care nothing. In fact, I prefer not to be known as in any way connected with it."

Again Mr. Hardiman rocked his body slowly back

and forth, pressing his finger-tips together. After a moment spent in thought he spoke.

"All right, Mr. Swanson; I will do as you say. The mortgage on Mason's cottage shall be cancelled to-morrow, and you can assure yourself of the fact after it is done by a look at the mortgage record in the recorder's office."

Then he added: "Since you are given to plain words I will follow the example you set and tell you that you may expect to find the six hundred dollars you have compelled me to give Mason, charged up against you in any deal we may chance to have in the future."

Hardiman rose as he spoke, seeing which, Swanson rose also and took his hat.

"I certainly expected that," he said, laughing. "I think I understand your methods of transacting business pretty well, Mr. Hardiman, and in dealing with you, will endeavor not to forget them. It is best for men like you and I to be frank with each other. Well, good-day; perhaps our next deal may be more to your advantage."

"That is quite possible, I think," returned Hardiman. "Good-day."

Swanson passed from the inner to the outer office. Miss Mason was at her desk, having stepped out at the time Swanson saw her, to purchase some trifle that she needed in her work, and had forgotten as she came from dinner.

Although he would have preferred not to meet her at this time, he did not permit the fact to appear in his manner; but bowed and went directly to her desk, took the hand she offered—a little stiffly, he thought—very cordially in his own, and chatted gaily for a mo-

ment or two; apologized for not having called recently on the plea of being busy, asked after her father's health, and intimated that if he had not sinned beyond forgiveness by staying away so long, he should like to call at an early day. At which Jennie—though at first inclined to be a little distant—melted a trifle and assured him that both herself and her father would be pleased to see him at any time. He thanked her, bowed again and left the room and the building.

The truth was, that Swanson could not come into the presence of this young and beautiful girl without feeling strongly attracted to her, and experiencing a desire for her company. He felt her goodness and purity, and was drawn toward her, though not irresistibly. On her part, she had the same feeling of being attracted, but with this difference: that she could not fully approve of some things she saw in his character, though what those things were she would have found it difficult to explain.

CHAPTER XVI.

In which Mr. Swanson wonders if he shall ever marry, and whom. Also contains a truthful account of the manner in which the transfer of the mortgage on Mason's home was offered and received. And what secret purpose Mr. Hardiman had back of it.

One evening, shortly after his visit to Mr. Hardiman's office, and his interview with that gentleman, Mr. Swanson dropped in at the Mason Cottage.

He found Jennie and her father at home, and was given a courteous welcome by both.

A conversation upon general topics ensued in which all three joined to some extent; and a very pleasant evening was spent.

Mr. Mason was a man of wide information and a good talker—provided he had a good listener—and on this occasion he had a good listener in Mr. Swanson, and he led the conversation, though without excluding his daughter or their guest.

Swanson was surprised at the knowledge of men and things, and at the breadth of thought exhibited by Mr. Mason, and enjoyed hearing him talk. Owing to the frequency of his former visits, and the length of time which had elapsed since his last one, he did not feel quite as much at his ease as under other circumstances he might have done, and was rather glad to have another than himself direct the conversation.

As always before, when in Miss Mason's presence,

he felt drawn toward her, and was conscious of a feeling which he did not hesitate to acknowledge to himself was slightly warmer than that felt for other young ladies of his acquaintance. He had never thought seriously of allowing the feeling to grow upon him, but had, on the contrary always said to himself, and, as we have seen, on one or two occasions to others, that he should not marry Jennie Mason.

To-night, however, as he watched her expressive face while listening to her father's entertaining conversation, and occasionally, as she made some remark that showed how like him she was in depth of feeling and native ability, he could not help saying to himself that here was a woman in every way worthy to mate with the proudest in the land, and one who would be a true and able helpmate to him who should win her affections and persuade her to become his wife; and although he had intended this to be the last call he should ever make upon the Masons, he found himself at leaving, accepting with some eagerness, an invitation to "Call again," and volunteering the promise that it should not be long before he did so.

"If I had not put up that job on Old Hardiman, I half believe I would marry her," he communed with himself, as he walked home through the moonlight, "that is, if she would have me, which I doubt. I couldn't ask her now though, after what I have done, and what I told Hardiman. It would look as if I were as low down mean as Peters. Heigh-ho! But this is a funny world, any way. Wonder if I shall ever marry, and who."

And the Masons—Jennie and her father. They could not be other than pleased with their guest of the evening.

Mr. Mason was far from being an egotist, but there is no one who talks well who does not sometimes enjoy having a good listener: and there was that in the respectful manner in which Congressman Swanson listened while Mr. Mason talked, that could not but be pleasant to a man who felt that he had some claim to the respect of his fellows, but who seldom found those of equal intelligence with himself who were interested enough in the subjects in which he took delight, to be good listeners.

To be sure, Jennie was a respectful, and generally, an interested listener to her father's conversation, no matter what the topic might be, but he could not feel quite the same pleasure in talking to her that he took in talking to, and receiving respectful attention from a man like Swanson, who was a representative of the busy, bustling world, from which, since the accident that had crippled him so awfully, Mr. Mason felt himself excluded at just the period of life when his interest and activities should have been greatest.

And so he had talked, and Mr. Swanson and Jennie had listened, occasionally joining in with suggestions and observations, which were rather an encouragement to him to continue than an interruption, and thus the evening had passed.

Without having said so to himself, Swanson had expected something to be said by father or daughter about the cancellation of the mortgage on the cottage, and was prepared to evade any questions intended to draw from him a confession of having been instrumental in bringing it about. But no such questions were asked, and no allusion to the affair of the mortgage was made by Mr. Mason or his daughter, and of course Mr. Swanson could not broach the subject himself, since

he had determined that his part in the matter should remain unknown.

Thinking of it afterward, he realized that there was no reason why the Masons should mention the matter to one no more intimate with them than he had been of late and that it was only his own knowledge of his connection with it that had led him to expect it.

He knew, however, that Hardiman had kept his word and cancelled the mortgage, for he had himself examined and found it properly done upon the mortgage records kept by the county.

What he did not know, and what did not occur to him as being a matter of any importance, was upon what pretended grounds Hardiman had explained the cancellation of the mortgage to Mr. Mason, to induce him to accept it. If he thought of it at all, he had taken it for granted that Mr. Mason would accept it as being an act of justice toward himself, from one who had wronged him in the past; for Swanson knew that Mr. Mason felt that Hardiman had greatly overreached him in the transactions which had formerly taken place between them.

And, in fact, that is the way Mr. Mason did regard it; and it was in something in that light Mr. Hardiman had offered it.

The truth is that Mr. Hardiman had his own reasons for not being so much averse to the cancellation of the mortgage on Mason's cottage as Swanson supposed. He had, in fact, and of his own motion, considered the possibility of doing so before Swanson made the demand—had thought of doing so upon certain conditions which he imagined possible, and provided it would assist him in attaining certain ends that he had in contemplation.

Although now past sixty years of age, he had never yet put a curb upon his passions, but on the contrary, as the years passed and he accumulated riches, had made their gratification one of the objects of his existence, and the wealth which he squeezed from others, the means of gratifying them.

He had long looked upon Jennie Mason with anything but honorable intentions; but all efforts at even the faintest advance beyond the liberty of address, proper from an employer to one employed had met with such evidently unsuspicious yet decisive rebuff as to destroy any hopes he had entertained of easily winning the girl's confidence.

Now he hoped by the surrender and cancellation of the mortgage upon the cottage that sheltered herself and her father to put himself in a better light before her, and in time, win her confidence and accomplish his dishonorable purpose.

Accordingly, he was little averse to doing what Swanson demanded, provided he was allowed to do it in his own way, and was not made to appear as being forced to do it under threat of exposure. And when Swanson had promised not to permit himself to be known as having any connection whatever with the matter, had agreed to it and had kept his word.

The day following the interview in his private office, he had written "paid in full and cancelled" across the face of the mortgage in red ink and had then gone to the recorder's office and done the same with the copy of the instrument on record there, and had then given it to Miss Mason, as she was about to leave the office for home, after completing her duties for the day.

"My dear Miss Jennie," he had said. "I want you to do me a little favor—I want you to take this paper

to your father. It is the mortgage upon the cottage where you live, and it is cancelled."

"Cancelled?" returned Jennie, surprised and not certain that she understood clearly the meaning of the word.

"Yes—cancelled, my dear, which means that it is paid, or at least, that your father will never have to pay it. I see you are surprised, but there is no occasion for it. It is just possible you know that I am not quite so bad a man as some folks paint me. Your father and I were once friends and partners. We did not agree about some things, and I have imagined that your father fancied at times I did not treat him fairly. I have sometimes thought he felt that way, at least. Now of course I do not see things in the same light he does, but I have been prosperous while he has been unfortunate in all things, except in having so beautiful a daughter, and although of course there are no legal claims which he could bring against me, it is yet possible that there is a moral obligation resting upon me which it will take the cancellation of this mortgage to discharge. At any rate, I have taken pleasure in so regarding it; and I trust it will give your father and yourself as much pleasure to receive it as it has me to do it; and that in future, we may be better friends than we have been in the past."

To say that Jennie Mason was surprised at this exhibition of seeming generosity on the part of Mr. Hardiman is to put it altogether too mildly. She was overwhelmed, and for some moments could find neither words nor voice in which to reply.

She had always regarded her employer as anything but a generous man.

She had not supposed him to be even just or honest.

She knew that her father believed him to have taken unfair advantage in their dealings together, and she knew also that he had the reputation of being a hard man with his employes.

She had entered his service with extreme reluctance and only because she was under the imperative necessity of finding employment of some kind, and could find no other place that she could so easily fill and be at home nights and mornings to care for the cottage and get supper and breakfast for herself and father. She knew of the existence of the mortgage, for she had saved of her earnings regularly to meet the accruing interest, knowing that a failure to do so promptly might result in a foreclosure, and eviction from the premises, and hoping, as people always will hope, even against all reason and precedent, that something would arise, some fortuitous event that would enable them to pay the principle soon to come due, and so save their little home.

And now the mortgage was cancelled, dead, as she understood it, and would trouble them no more. The thing which she had hoped for when there seemed no reason for hoping, had actually occurred, and through the generosity of this man whom she had always regarded as—if not actually an enemy—at least something less than a friend.

How they had wronged him in their thoughts, and how quick her father would be to recognize the fact and apologize to Mr. Hardiman for having so misjudged him. And how happy they should be with this burden lifted from their minds. No more interest to pay. How noble and generous Mr. Hardiman was, and how meanly they had judged him.

All this passed through the girl's mind as she stood

with downcast eyes, struggling to control her emotion and holding the cancelled mortgage in her hands where her employer had placed it.

At last she looked up and choking back the tears, tried to express her gratitude and her appreciation of the generous act of the man standing before her, and who now placed his hands upon hers and checking her broken efforts at expression of her feelings, gently and with what she thought to be a fatherly manner, bade her cease to think further about it.

"There, there, my dear," he said, "don't thank me. Like enough it is no more than I ought to have done before. Who knows? It is a hard world at best, and we ought not to forget our old friends. I hope I know how to be generous even if I do not wear my heart where everybody can see it. Run on home now, my dear, and come back bright and early in the morning. It is pleasant seeing you at your desk when I come in in the morning, and I miss you if you are not there when I come."

And the old rascal gently pushed the girl through the office door and closed it behind her.

Mr. Mason was as much surprised as his daughter had been when, on reaching home, she placed the mortgage in his hands and told him what Mr. Hardiman had said.

At first he was suspicious of some ulterior object underlying this seemingly generous act, and not a little disposed to refuse acceptance of the gift, at least not without himself seeing Mr. Hardiman and having from him an explicit statement that the cancellation of the mortgage was but an act of tardy justice—reparation rather than a gift—from the man whom he felt had wronged him in the past; but Jennie was so happy

in the thought that their little home was saved to them, and that now that they did not need any longer to save up for the interest, they could have many little articles of comfort in the house, and for her own wardrobe—running on about it with a nimble tongue while she prepared the evening meal—in her girlish innocence crediting Mr. Hardiman with all this suddenly acquired happiness, and repeating with unintentional exaggeration —the fruit of a grateful and overflowing heart—what he had said about his past relations with her father and his desire to make full payment for the benefits he had received through that relationship—in a word, was so happy and so entirely void of all suspicion of anything but the most generous motives actuating Mr. Hardiman in the matter, that her father had not the heart to utter a word of suspicion; and, listening to Jennie, felt his suspicions gradually fading in the warmth of her praise of the man, and so dismissed all thought of refusing the boon that had befallen them; and ended by writing—since he could not well walk so great a distance—a letter, thanking Mr. Hardiman for the act which, so he wrote: "Although it appears to me to be but an act of justice, is yet one of great generosity also, since I have no claim that would be recognized in the courts of the country."

And Jennie had returned to the office next morning "bright and early" as her employer had requested, and when he came in a little later, looked smilingly up into his face as she handed him her father's letter of thanks, and tried to add some words of her own to what she knew her father had written.

"You don't know how happy you have made us, Mr. Hardiman," she said. "It has been such hard work to be comfortable and cheerful with papa all

crippled up and the thought of losing the only home we have, staring us in the face."

And again the tears swelled up in her eyes and she dropped her gaze upon the desk in front of her.

"Well, my dear, don't say anything more about it," returned Hardiman. "It's all right—all right, only what I ought to do no doubt. The law is not always a just arbiter and what the courts say is legal isn't always all that men ought to consider in their dealings with one another. I am more than paid if I have made you happy—I am indeed."

And he laid his hand upon the girl's head in what she regarded as a kind of benediction, and turning, entered his private office, leaving her to her own duties.

If she had but known what was passing in the man's mind, she would have left the office instantly, never to return. And if her father had known, crippled as he was, he would have crawled there and at least have tried to wear his crutches out over the old villain's head.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PANIC, AND SOME OF ITS FRUITS.

Money panic in New York.

Failure of J. Crook & Co.

Liabilities unknown but said to be up into the millions.

The Metropolitan and Exchange Banks also close their doors.

Great excitement in New York and other money centers.

Cause of the panic and its probable effect upon the country.

ASSOCIATED PRESS DISPATCH.—Wall Street and New York generally were startled this afternoon by the report which spread like wildfire that the great Banking House of J. Crook & Co., one of the largest in the country, had closed its doors and acknowledged itself unable to meet its engagements. The amount of the bank's obligations is unknown but is undoubtedly very large. Various rumors fix it at various sums. In fact one can hear almost anything they prefer regarding it, from one million up to one hundred millions, as everybody is excited and the wildest rumors are afloat.

The effect upon the country will undoubtedly be severe, as already the Metropolitan and Exchange Banks have suspended and announced their inability to continue business until they can ascertain how seriously they are affected by the failure of J. Crook & Co., with whom they have large connections. Other banks may also be involved and if so, the effect will be serious and far-reaching.

The country generally, however, will not be greatly a sufferer, as the sudden panic is due to no failure of crops or any cause that can long continue, but is rather a flurry among speculators and will soon pass and leave the business of the country improved.

Some annoyance to the business men may, and quite likely will follow the suspension of the banks, particularly if the panic becomes general as is predicted, by the more timid, but a little time and patience will remove all this, and the country will be the better for the flurry.

The above dispatch appearing in the Smithville Chronicle, Bugle, and all other papers throughout the length and breadth of the country, caused feelings of astonishment and curiosity in the minds of a great majority of the people, and of anxiety and dread in the few.

So persistent had been the declarations of the press and the politicians that business was fast getting upon a solid basis, and that a tide of prosperity was sure to speedily follow the period of gradually falling prices through which the country had been passing for some time, that this sudden failure of some of the largest banking institutions of the country, while it caused business men who understood, in some measure, what the effect of a general panic must be, to quake and tremble, only excited feelings of wonderment in the minds of the masses of the people, and especially in the agricultural districts, and among the rural population.

They could not understand how the failure of a private banking house in New York, or of any number of them, was going to seriously affect them, and when told that our financial system was such that the power to close down every factory in the United States, stop the wheels of production and throw the entire class of wage-workers out of employment, lay in the hands of a few men to whom Congress had given the control of the medium of exchange—when told this they laughed and refused to believe it, or even to listen attentively to any such nonsensical babble.

"The United States," they said, "had the best financial system of any country in the world; but that the exigences of the civil war through which we had just passed had compelled the government to inflate the currency; that now we were steadily approaching

specie resumption, and that as soon as this was accomplished a flood-tide of prosperity would sweep over the land such as no country and no people had seen since the morning stars sang together."

They had been told this by the leaders of both political parties. They had read it in the great daily and weekly journals of the country; not only the political, but the agricultural and religious press as well, had declared it, and they believed it; and any one who said differently they regarded as a crank, and a rather dangerous character to be at large in society.

Meantime the panic spread.

Bank after bank closed its doors.

From New York to Boston and Philadelphia, and from these great money centers, east and west and north it passed, like a bird of ill-omen, and wherever it alighted it brought desolation and death.

Following the banks, came the suspension of the business firms, and after them the manfuacturers, who, finding no markets for their wares, and no means of borrowing money to purchase material or pay their employes, closed their factories, banked their fires and went into the hands of receivers.

Two millions of unemployed men sought in vain for a chance to exchange their labor for bread, while eight millions of women and children waited and prayed, suffered and hoped and despaired.

The country began to be overrun with tramps.

Men out of employment and seeking it, out of money and stopping to beg a meal and permission to sleep in barns, or out-buldings, began to be seen daily, and many times a day, on all roads leading from one manfacturing town to another.

Then the states began to pass laws for the suppression of tramps.

Pennsylvania led off; and was quickly followed by other states; and before long it came to be known that a man out of work and seeking it could no longer safely ask for the gift of a crust at any house within the limits of an incorporated town, or even at a country farm-house if an officer of the law happened to be within hearing of the request.

Even to ask for the proverbial "cup of cold water," if the appearance of the person asking it was such as to indicate poverty and suffering, was liable to be followed by arrest and incarceration in a felon's cell, or a ball and chain with labor upon the public streets.

Such enactments and such arrests were demanded by the rich and respectable.

For now, while the masses were daily growing poorer and poorer, while enforced idleness and rapidly falling prices were eating up, or had already consumed the savings of millions of the wealth producers of the land, the few who had directed the legislation of the country to this end, and for this purpose, were rolling in wealth and daily growing richer by a large portion of that which the business and producing classes were losing, and these men demanded protection of the law.

"Our property," they said, "and possibly our lives are endangered by the presence of these lazy and lawless characters, these tramps who roam about the country pretending to want work but in reality preferring to beg." And as the machinery of legislation was in their hands, or the hands of their dupes and tools, the politicians, "Tramp laws" were passed, and it became a crime for a man out of employment and out of money to ask for bread.

Then greed, the meanest of all the passions, greed which consumes the souls of men as a leprosy the body, showed itself among the smaller politicians; and those who were in office began to emulate the example of their political superiors and of the greedy souls that were back of them and had dictated the legislation that had brought such awful calamnities upon the people and filled the land with suffering and woe.

Petty officials, sheriffs, city marshalls and town constables began the nefarious work of arresting men in search of work and clapping them into jail for the sake of the profit that they made off the city or county on a few meals of victuals furnished to the poor fellows whom they had thus transformed from honest men into "jail birds."

A favorite way of these petty officials—these caricatures upon decent humanity—these jackdaw emulators of the larger birds of prey that were feeding off the vitals of the people, was to arrest as many "tramps" as was possible late on Saturday, so that they could not be brought before the mayor or justice before Monday; and were thus compelled to live in jail from Saturday afternoon until Monday, which enabled their captors to charge up their board for that length of time.

As the board necessarily furnished to "tramps" was not of the best, while the pay allowed for it by the Ring which run the affairs of the town or city, was, of the best, the profit on such transactions was considerable—depending largely upon how energetic and successful the officers were in making arrests.

As the arrested party had no remedy, even though found, on trial, to have a few shillings on his person, and not yet to have been reduced to the necessity of

begging, it was a perfectly safe as well as a paying business to "run them in;" and in many towns a regular and systematic business was made of it.

The result was what alone could follow.

Honest men were transformed into criminals by the thousands and tens of thousands.

To-day a manufacturing establishment failed and five hundred men were thrown out of employment.

They sought it elsewhere in their own town or city and were unable to obtain it.

All the other manufactories had closed or were running on half time and there were no vacancies for any one to fill.

For weeks and months they sought for work; living, in the meantime, themselves and their families, upon their previous savings, or upon what they could get for odd jobs—cleaning the side-walks from snow—splitting a bit of wood—carrying a load of coal up-stairs—any thing for which some kindly disposed person would give them a dime or a quarter, and then, when all their savings were exhausted, a rumor that some manufacturing establishment in the next town was going to start up again—a rush of many to get a job, disappointment to all or a portion of the eager seekers for work, and, out of money, with clothes old and worn, they continued their tramp in search of employment and fainting with hunger, begged for bread and—were given it in a cell of some county or city jail.

A night, a day, two nights perhaps, a prisoner in a prison cell.

Then the arraignment in court.

The charge, "vagrancy, too lazy to work and caught begging." The verdict: "Thirty days on the streets," and the hellish work is done.

An honest man—a man eager for work and anxious, how anxious but for permission to earn a support for his wife and little ones, is arrested.

A man with a heart full of bitterness at the awful wrong done him and his, a man with a blasted reputation, a broken heart and a hopeless future is released when the sentence has expired, and one more has been added to the number of professional criminals and tramps.

A man with all the incentives to be a good citizen which family ties, wife, home, children give, which reputation for honesty and morality supply, left home in an effort to sustain that reputation and obtain by honest work the means of keeping those ties unimpaired;—such a man was arrested but such a man was not released.

But, in place of such a man, is released one without home ties; for before this man with blasted reputation, this jail bird, can find the means of support for wife and babies, the family is broken up and gone. The grave or the asylum has opened to receive the wife, possibly she has accepted the offer of one of the birds of prey and has sold her honor and her husband's honor for bread for herself and babies. Possibly the babies are in the foundling's home; possibly they are dead of hunger and want and cold.

God knows!

The broken-hearted, hopeless, disgraced tramp and criminal, once their loving husband and father, never will know.

For how could he, the tramp, the jail bird, without money, dodging daily the officers of the law who seek cause for his arrest—afraid to beg, yet compelled to beg or steal—how can he return and search out his

babies when they are scattered in the homes of others, in Poor Houses, in Foundling Hospitals?

How find the wife in the kitchen of some bird of prey as a servant, or in some brothel as his mistress? How can he do this?

Or if he could and did, how could he ask them to recognize him—the jail bird, the creature upon whose forehead society—the law—has placed its brand—him the "Tramp," the convict, whose one limb still lags as he walks from the habit of dragging a ball and chain—how can he ask wife or child to believe in him, honor him, love him again?

He feels that he can not. And if he could, to what use? Would it bring them bread?

Could they live on their faith in his honor? on their belief in his affection? on this knowledge that he had been wrongly accused and branded?

If he were to search for and find them it would be but to separate again—he to tramp, they to eat the bread of charity or of shame.

Why should he seek them?

He is not so foolish.

He still seeks, for a time, to find employment with the hope—a hope that grows fainter and fainter, day by day—first of finding employment, and then of finding and re-uniting them; but not for long does he seek.

Soon hope departs; courage flees—ambition dies within him.

He is no longer a man. He is a brute.

Without ambition, without hope, without courage as completely as he is without home or wife or child.

The work of the conspirators is completed.

Specie payment has been resumed, and these are

some of its fruits; though not all that the tree has borne.

Other fruits there are which this tree has produced—fruits that look fairer to the eye—fruits that cast a sweeter perfume upon the air—but fruits as poisonous as these, and as bitter to the taste.

But we will look at them by and bye.

I would not uncover all the wrongs done the people, nor draw wholly aside the veil from before those who did these awful things, lest the people in their just wrath do that they should be sorry for.

Wait!

"The mills of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine."

"Time," 'tis said, "rights all things."

The fullness of time is almost here, when the people shall themselves draw aside the veil, and with staring eyes, look upon the awful wrongs done to them, and shall understand the magnitude of the crimes committed against them by the politicians whom they trusted so implicitly and so blindly. And by those who were back of the politicians, directing, inspiring and supervising their hellish work.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Swanson in Congress. The Bugle and the Chronicle are agreed regarding certain matters of local interest. Mr. Hardiman fails to accomplish his purpose. He also fails in business. He takes revenge upon Jennie Mason and her crippled father.

Meantime Horace Swanson had taken his seat in Congress as representative of the people of his district, and was performing the duties of that position as other congressmen were performing theirs.

That is to say, he was representing his party—the party of Respectability and great moral ideas.

Other men represented a different party; a party that made less claim to extra respectability; a party in fact that rather prided itself, when before the people for their suffrages with being just modestly self-respecting, but in no sense aristocratic, or what might be termed "stiffly" respectable. There was no superfluity of starch in the linen they exhibited on the hustings and before the voting public.

For, as the one party sought to win votes by an appearance of great sanctity, and appealed to the religious and extra-moral sentiment of the country in order to conceal its crimes against morality, so the other party made a special claim to being the party of the common people that it might win their votes and hide its crimes against them. And now met together in Congress at Washington for the ostensible

purpose of legislating for the good of the country, they so managed, or were so managed, as to appear to be defeated in their efforts to render the people a service, each by the other; while, individually, members of either found an excuse for doing nothing for the relief of the people on the plea that they had acted throughout solidly with the party that elected them.

A few of Swanson's constituents, led and advised by Mr. Nixon and Mr. Mason, had drafted a bill providing for a re-issue of the greenback legal tenders to replace those already called in and destroyed, and for the remonitization of silver, and had sent it to Swanson with a letter setting forth their reasons for believing that such a measure would bring an immediate revival of the drooping industries of the country, and urging him to introduce it and insist on its passage by Congress.

To this, Mr. Swanson replied that he would introduce the bill as requested, but that it was entirely useless to expect its passage with the present temper of Congress; and that, in fact, he himself could not urge its passage as it was in direct antagonism to the policy of the party that had elected him, and whose representation in the House and Senate had in joint caucus, decided to favor a bill of exactly opposite import.

"I regret," the letter went on to say, "that I cannot comply any more fully with your wishes and views, which are in some measure my own; but I feel bound to sustain the policy of the party to which—with the help of the labor organization—I owe my election. And, beside, is it not worth while to stop and inquire whether, having gone thus far on the road to a solid financial basis, it would be wise now to retrace our steps

in any degree, since to do so must result in again being compelled to travel the same road at some other and not distant day. The great financiers of all countries have, and are, agreed that no people can maintain a permanent prosperity, except the medium of exchange be based upon the precious metals which alone have a value sufficiently unchangeable for the purpose. To accomplish this, it has been necessary that our currency, unavoidably increased during the war to an extent that made these metals inadequate as a basis, be reduced in volume to meet the requirements demanded by a specie basis. And to this necessary contraction is due the present condition of the country. But we are now nearly at the desired haven. Specie basis has been nearly reached and renewed prosperity is but a step farther in advance; and to turn back now would—in the judgment of the wisest men in both parties—be a false step and productive of untold evils.

"To be frank with you, my own judgment sustains theirs; and while I shall regret it if our views do not harmonize, I beg you will still remember I am acting in harmony with the opinions of the great mass of the people and of the leaders of the party. In fact, the leaders of both parties are entirely agreed upon the main principles affecting the finances of the country, though disagreed as to the minor matters of detail; and it is over these details that Congress is fighting—our opponents seeking to obtain an advantage for their party by making it appear to the country that they are preventing us from doing a great injustice to the people."

To this letter, Mr. Nixon replied: That while he had scarcely less hope now than when in company with Mr. Mason and others he drafted the bill Mr.

Swanson had received, that it would beome a law through action of the present Congress, yet he and they had felt it their duty as men and citizens to enter their protest against the system which was being fastened upon the country.

"Neither do I now see," wrote Nixon, "that the opinion of the great financiers are of value to us as a nation of wealth producers, since they have themselves made it only too evident that their interests are, in their own opinion, quite different from ours. So much so indeed that what is desirable to them is quite undesirable to us. Neither is it true that the—so called—precious metals, gold and silver, are unchangeable in their commercial value for if you will compare their values with any other commodity, you will find that they are the most changeable of all commodities. And beside, nothing that is not sufficient as a basis for a medium of exchange in times of imminent peril can reasonably be declared a safe basis at any time; since no nation knows at what hour an imminent peril may arise. And to be compelled not only to meet the peril when it arises, but also to change the basis of its medium of exchange in the face of the peril, is a folly that can be excused only upon the ground of a necessity arising from ignorance that the basis given in time of peace and prosperity is not sufficient in time of war and anxiety, which plea we, all of us, yourself included, are stopped from making, by the acknowledgment you have already made that the precious metals are not a sufficient basis at such times, if indeed at any time."

To this Mr. Swanson replied by simply reiterating the statement contained in his first letter; that he was acting in fullest harmony with his party and must con-

tinue so to do, though regretting that his views failed to accord with those of his correspondent and a few others among his constituents.

It was about this time, too, that the Chronicle and Bugle were able to furnish their readers with another sensational article. This time it was a matter of local interest primarily, and not being political in its nature the two journals agreed substantially in the report concerning it.

They announced simultaneously and with about equal display of head lines and length of editorial comment, the failure of "The Great manufacturing Establishment of O. L. D. Hardiman;" and the fact that by this failure, five hundred more laborers were added to the thousands of men already in enforced idleness in the country.

Hardiman had struggled along longer than most of his competitors, and most other manufacturers of any kind.

He was a shrewd manager, and had kept his business, as he thought, well in hand; but collections had grown worse and worse, and sales smaller and smaller; until, seeing the probability of being forced to suspend in the end anyway, he had decided to make the most that could be made out of the necessity, and had begun to hide away such of his property as it was possible to hide, and to increase his liabilities as much as he could without exciting suspicion, putting a large portion of it in his pocket, and ended by appearing in the bankrupt court in a shape much more to his own secret satisfaction than to that of his creditors.

The news of the Hardiman failure cast a gloom over the entire community.

There had been enough failures previous to this to

enable people to understand its full meaning and import. Several smaller firms of manufactures had gone to the wall earlier in the season, and their employes were still out of work, and with little hope of soon finding any.

And now that their numbers were increased by hundreds of Hardiman's men, the outlook was gloomy indeed.

Neither did the merchants appear less depressed by the failure than the working men. They had been carrying the unemployed laborers upon their books to a considerable extent already, not liking to refuse credit to men who had been their customers for years, now that they were temporarily out of a job; but what were they to do with these others who would now be under the necessity of asking credit also?

So long as Hardiman's men were drawing their pay regularly and spending it with the merchants, their trade helped them to carry those who were compelled to have credit; but now, when all must have credit, and none could pay costs, there seemed no way of continuing in business, and many of them surrendered at once and joined those gone before in the bankrupt courts.

When Hardiman failed he owed his men a full month's wages.

Formerly he had paid everybody on Saturday night; but when he conceived the idea of going into bankruptcy to save a portion of his fortune, he had planned to rob his employes of a month's wages, and to accomplish this, had changed his system from weekly to monthly payments; so that when his men left the shop on the day that the failure was announced, they did so knowing that not only would there be no

employment for them in future days, but that their labor for the past month was lost to them also.

On that day, Jennie Mason had come home before noon with eyes red and swollen from weeping, and had told her father in explanation, that she should not return to the office any more, as Mr. Hardiman had failed, and there would be no more work for her there.

What she did not tell her father was, that in communicating the fact to her, Mr. Hardiman had accompanied it with a shameful proposal, promising that if she would consent to be his mitsress, he would provide handsomely for herself and father, and threatening that if she did not, he would bring dire misfortunes upon them.

At first Jennie had not understood what he meant by his offer of providing for them. When she did, she made no reply in words, but frightened and confused, had caught up her hat and darted out of the office and the house before the would-be betrayer could prevent; and it was partly shame and partly fear of what her father—in his righteous wrath might do to avenge the insult to his child that restrained her from telling more of the story than was necessary of why she was not going back to the office.

To her father, the fact that she had lost her place, and that there seemed now no way open by which they could earn their living, appeared to be sufficient cause for Jennie's distress, and he tried to sooth her by holding out hopes of other employment and by reminding her of the fact that the cottage was at least free from incumbrance, and that with a shelter over their heads, they surely need not fear starving or freezing to death.

Had he known the whole truth, he would not have

been able to offer even this poor comfort; but he did not know, and Jennie did not know the full capacity for villainy that the creature Hardiman's heart contained.

His threat of bringing disaster upon the Masons in case Jennie refused compliance with his wishes, had been no idle one.

He had studied well every means by which he had deemed it possible to accomplish his purpose; and his last resort was that of depriving her of every hope of an honest livelihood and of the shelter that she felt to be so securely theirs. And when Hardiman's books were brought into court and his statement of assets and liabilities presented, lo, and behold! the name of James Mason appeared as a partner with Mr. Hardiman in certan transactions connected with the establishment that had failed; and the cottage in which he and his daughter lived, and which the mortgage released by Hardiman had once stood against, was held by the court to be the private property of a partner, and as such was liable for the debts of the firm after the property of the firm had first been exhausted.

Hardiman had so fixed his accounts as to make this appear to be the true condition of affairs. Having decided upon his course, he proceeded accordingly, and had made such entries in his books as to make Mr. Mason's connection with him appear to be that of a partner in certain of his transactions.

There was the old partnership account between them closed long ago; certainly so far as any intention on Hardiman's part of paying, or Mason's of receiving any benefit from it; but to this Hardiman had added the account of the value of the mortgage on Mason's house which he had cancelled, causing it

to appear as his share of the profits of their joint transaction with others, and so making the property liable as has been stated.

Against such a conclusion, Mr. Mason of course protested; but the court refused to believe his evidence or that of his daughter Jennie, against the seemingly stronger evidence of Hardiman's books; and poor Jennie found herself fearfully embarrassed, and her crippled father felt his anger rise to a pitch that was almost uncontrollable by the question put to her by the council for the creditors; which question indicated that if her statement regarding the manner in which the mortgage came to be cancelled were true, it was the result of relations between herself and Mr. Hardiman not creditable to her.

Hardiman's revenge seemed complete.

Not only had he caused to be taken from the crippled man and his child, the only bit of property they possessed, but he had placed a blot upon the girl's character that would make it still more difficult, make it almost impossible for her to obtain a living, however poor, except through the means he had himself proposed, and to which he still hoped to compel her to consent.

CHAPTER XIX.

"It is our only hope," said Nixon, "Agitate and Educate." Mr. Mason is suggested as the laboring men's Candidate for Congress. Which suggestion slightly worries his daughter Jennie, who thinks of Mr. Swanson. The rival papers of Smithville make another announcement.

"We must educate the people upon these questions. Agitate and educate: this is our only hope as the means of saving the people from serfdom, the country from anarchy and civilization from final annihilation."

The speaker was Nixon and, his auditors Joseph Mason and his daughter Jennie and three or four mechanics of their acquaintance, who had met for the purpose of consulting as to what could and should be done toward bettering the condition of the wealth producing classes who were fast sinking into serfs.

The first flurry of the great financial panic was over some time since. The banks were beginning to resume payment, and here and there a manufactury of some kind was struggling to get upon its feet once more and begin business over again. But there were still thousands of unemployed laborers in all the cities and larger towns, while in the country the farmers were slowly but surely sinking deeper and deeper into the morass of debt and mortgages; and to men like Nixon and Mason, whose well balanced minds and clear perceptions of cause and effect enabled them to forecast

the result of the financial legislation of Congress past and present, the future presented a gloomy view.

They felt, unless something could be done to induce the people to think for themselves, instead of relying upon their political leaders, that the Republic was doomed, and labor in the new world destined to become what it is in the old—simply a beast of burden; an ass bearing whatever weights are placed upon its back; and for its reward and sustenance eating of the thistles growing by the roadside and in waste places.

They were met now in the wretchedly poor shell of a house—consisting of two rooms only—into which Mr. Mason and his daughter had moved when compelled to vacate the cottage some months before. Even this shelter, poor as it was, they would have been unable to obtain but for the assistance of Mr. Nixon, who having been for some time foreman in the shop where he worked previous to his employer's failure, had received good wages; and being anxious to get into business for himself, had saved all he could, and at the coming of the panic and shutting down of the shop, was ahead several hundred dollars.

When the great misfortune befell the Masons, he insisted on being permitted to assist them sufficiently to prevent the necessity of the crippled father going to the Poor House, while the daughter sought employment in somebody's kitchen, which seemed the only alternative left them when their cottage was taken and Jennie could find no office work or sewing of any kind to do.

"I insist upon it, Mr. Mason," he had said when they hesitated through pride and fear of overburdening him. "I insist upon it both for your sake and for Jennie's. We have been friends now all round for a

long time, and I claim the right of proving that friendship is of worth in times like these. I have rented a bit of a shop down on Davis street, and am going to try and get some repair work to do, and with what I have saved up, I shall get on all right myself and can help my nearest friends a little. You shall take the house, which, wretchedly poor as it is, is better than none a good deal, and I will board with you and sleep at the shop. I shall have to pay my board somewhere, and may as well pay it to you; and I will get one or two others to do so, and by uniting our mites and living cheaply, we will get along without separating you and your daughter and by and by times will grow better again and then she will get employment and you can get a better place and be comfortable once more."

And they had accepted the offer with thankful hearts and a sigh of relief that even this escape from worse things was offered them. And so it came about that every few evenings some of the more intelligent of the laboring people dropped in to talk of the condition of the country and the prospects of obtaining employment and of what was to be the fate of the laboring and wealth-producing classes in the years to come.

There was nothing else they could talk of, for their present necessities and future prospects filled their minds completely.

They had not yet reached the point long occupied by the degraded laborers of some portions of the old world, where hope is dead and only brute instinct and brute passions remain; and their minds were constantly occupied with plans for elevating themselves and their fellow workers to a better condition, and for preventing a recurrence of the panics which they had learned periodically fell upon the country and brought

such suffering and tribulation to all except the few who profited by the misfortune and distress of the many.

"Yes," added Mr. Mason, taking up the conversation, "yes, we must educate the people upon these financial questions. We must teach them what money is, and how and why it is created. When they have learned that the only legitimate use of money is to enable those who produce wealth to make exchanges among themselves of what they have produced, they cannot help seeing that it is the duty of government to supply its citizens with the medium of exchange. And if it really wishes to be just and to make its citizens honest and keep them so, it will furnish the medium of exchange to the producers of wealth and to them only. For, since its only use is to facilitate the exchange of wealth, they only who produce wealth. or at least they first of all, have need of exchanging; and if the medium—the tools of exchange—is not furnished them direct by government, they must hire it of those to whom the government does furnish it; and thus the producers are robbed of a portion of their earnings. And, too, a means having been provided by which men can legally acquire wealth without rendering a service to others in return, the moral sense of the people becomes blunted, their ideas of right and wrong confused and their sense of justice obliterated, until in the end they are incapable of self-government, possible even of being held together under any form of National organization, but split up into factions, each led by some reckless and designing person, and each contending against each until the homogeneity of society is destroyed, and men—no longer capable of uniting their efforts—drift back into barbarism."

"If I read history aright this has occurred at least

once and possibly many times since the world began. And the causes that produced the one catastrophe of which alone we have an account were unquestionably the same causes that are now at work in our midst; namely, laws under which, and as a result of which the wealth produced by the many gradually passed into the hands of the few; ending in the few becoming entirely insensible to all feelings of justice and equity, and the masses too ignorant to continue production, except upon the lowest possible scale, and too brutish to be led by other than brute instinct and brute force."

"That is the way we are traveling now; and we are getting there at the rate of about sxty miles an hour," remarked one of the men who had been a brakesman on the railroad, but who was now out of a job. "Take the railroad companies for example; they keep a lot of fellows in their employ for the purpose of shooting down any of their men who go on a strike and seek to keep others from taking their places, while the matter is being settled. They call 'em Pinkerton detectives, but they are nothing more nor less than a lot of cut-throats that the corporation hires to do its bloody work. What worries me, though, is the fact that our fellows have got so low down that they will hire themselves to do such dirty work; but they will. I'll bet anything I've got that if the Central road wanted ten thousand men for just such work as these Pinkerton thugs do, they would get'em in forty-eight hours by advertising their wants in a quiet way in Chicago."

"No doubt of it, not the least doubt of it in the world," returned Mr. Mason, "it is exactly in line with what I was saying. The result of past legislation has been such as to confuse the ideas of the people as to what

is right and what wrong, blunt their moral perceptions and cause them to look upon everything as proper that the law can be induced to sustain, instead of seeking to make the law sustain that which is right. And while doing this, it has also so impoverished the masses of the people, that they can—with their weakened moral principle—be lured to do anything the law will permit, and that anyone will pay them for doing, even to the shooting of their fellow men at the bidding of a corporation which they themselves know to be acting selfishly and with intent to oppress themselves and others."

"Well, the only way out is to educate the people," again put in Mr. Nixon.

"We agree with you there," replied another of the men, "but how are we to go about it? The other fellows have possession of the press of the country, and not only will not let us use their columns, but will themselves use them to misrepresent us and lie about us in every conceivable way. What can we do?"

"Agitate and educate. It's our only salvation. We must support such papers as will advocate our views; we must talk in public and in private; we must organize the workingmen and get them to thinking and talking among themselves. It's a big job and will be uphill work but it has to be done. Election is coming on again now before very long, and we must put a ticket in the field and stand by it. That will help us call attention to the fact that everybody is not satisfied with the way Congress is doing, and so help us out that much."

"What about Mr. Swanson; shall we support him again?"

"So far as I am concerned—no! Nor any other man

who will not make the contest squarely upon our platform and without any endorsement from either of the old political parties. I want a straight-out, square, stand-up fight; so that we can present our ideas without holding anything back. Mr. Swanson is all right in his way and for his party. He means well, I think, but he cannot understand things from the position of the men who are down and being trodden upon. It isn't in the nature of things, and we ought not to have expected it. This time we must take a laboring man or a farmer for our candidate, and we must make the fight without asking quarter or help from any party."

"That's the talk; that's business," commented the others, heartily.

"But where shall we find our candidate? Suppose we nominate Nixon?"

"No; you shall not nominate me," returned Nixon. "I won't have it. I can do more good by working as a private among the men in the city for somebody else. Suppose you take Mr. Mason, here; he can't get about to make speeches, but he can write for such papers as will publish our theories, and he can advise and council the rest of us; and, anyway, we have no man whom we can nominate that is able financially, to make a canvass of the district; so Mr. Mason's, being a cripple, is nothing against him in this respect. About all we can do this time is to get a little start at organization and inject a few of our thoughts into the public mind. There is no probability of our electing any one for years to come."

To the proposition of making him a candidate, Mr. Mason objected, urging his physical inability among other things; but this objection had already been answered fully by Mr. Nixon, and it was agreed on

between those present that a convention of laboring men should be called, and that Mr Mason's name should be presented as their candidate.

Jennie was a little in doubt whether to be pleased or not at the decision to make a candidate for Congress of her father. She could not but be gratified at the mark of confidence and esteem thus shown him by those proposing it, even though all knew there was not the least expectation that he would receive more than a few hundred votes. But then, Jennie had not yet put Mr. Swanson entirely out of her mind and heart.

Not that she loved him, for this she would have denied, even to herself; but rather that the memory of him was pleasant; and she felt that it would be a disagreeable thing to say to him as her father's nomination would virtually be saying: "We don't trust you any longer; we do not think you have done what you could to help the people in their distress, and we are going now to vote for some one else; not indeed with any hope of electing him, but rather (so it seemed to her) as a punishment to you."

Still she made no protest against the proposed action of the laborers; indeed did not desire to make any; for, while she disliked the idea of appearing to censure Mr. Swanson, she yet saw the wisdom of the course proposed by Mr. Nixon, and felt that justice to the working men demanded that they select a candidate who should fully represent their views; and she knew that her father was such a man.

She could not help wishing, however, that some other had been selected, that it might not appear to Mr. Swanson that they, her father and herself and Mr.

Nixon, were first and foremost in denouncing him, and in seeking to defeat his re-election.

For who could tell what the effect of the nomination of her father or of anyone else by the laboring men, as a candidate entirely distinct from either of the old parties, might have upon the election? Which party would he draw from most strongly?

This was what no one could know in advance of election, and what those who advocated independent action cared nothing about.

"It makes no odds to us which of the old parties will be hurt worst," said Nixon, in discussing the proposed action with a group of idle laborers, one day; "what we have to do is to spread a knowledge of our doctrines upon the financial question among the people. Both old parties are our enemies, and one as much so as the other. We made a mistake before in selecting for our candidate one who, because he was not thoroughly indoctrinated with our ideas, was acceptable to our enemies, who at once surrounded him with such influences as prevented him from drawing near to us and becoming one of us in sentiment and spirit. What we must do this time is to take a man who is with us from principle; who understands of his own knowledge, what the condition of the wealth producers is, and why it is so. We cannot elect such a man now, but if we are true to ourselves, the time will come when we can."

"Hurrah for Nixon! he's right as a trivet," put in one of the crowd; "and I'm for a candidate that shall represent us and nobody else."

"Here too, and here and here," came from one and another of those standing about.

"Well then, let's organize a club and set the ball

rolling: come to my shop Saturday night and bring everybody with you that is in favor of what we propose, and we will make a start."

"Agreed: we'll all be there."

The little knot of men separated, and Nixon sought out another similar one and proposed the same thing. And then to another and another, putting in all his evenings in this manner, and inducing a considerable number to agree to be present on the following Saturday night and join the club.

A good many opposed it, and favored acting through one or other of the old parties; Nixon met these arguments by pointing to Swanson, who, while owing his election in part at least, to labor votes, had done little or nothing for them, and was not likely to; and urged that it was time the wealth producers of the country take matters in their own hands and legislate in their own interests and not in the interests of speculators, usurers and corporations. And so successfully did he contend that on the night set for the meeting, his shop was crowded with men ready to join the club; and when the time came for enrolling names full half a hundred added their's to the roll, and the first independent political club of Smithville was born and christened.

Arrangements were also made at the meeting for working up the laboring men of Smithville and other towns, and some talk was had of trying to interest the farmers and endeavoring to get them to join; but a feeling that the interests of the two classes of producers were different, existed to such an extent that nothing was finally attempted in this direction, although Nixon and a few others urged strongly that the interests of all wealth producers were the same,

and that a union of all was essential to the obtaining of justice.

"Justice is a universal principle," he said, "and justice to us cannot injure the farmers. Neither can justice to them fail of benefiting us. The laborers of the whole country must rise or sink together, and the sooner they learn this and enter into an effort to rise together, the sooner will all rise."

A notice of the organization of "The Smithville, Independent Political Club" appeared in the next morning's issue of the Bugle, under the heading:

"Getting ready to sell out again."

And in the Chronicle:

"Threatened independent political action."

Both papers spoke slightingly of the movement referring to Nixon as "a crank," and to Mr. Mason as "a man whose ideas on finance were as wobbly as his legs."

Yet in spite of this, and in spite of the efforts of the whippers-in of both old political parties to prevent it, other laboring men joined the club from week to week, and other clubs of a similar character were started in other places until the leading politicians were compelled to realize that if not checked the movement would soon become of sufficient magnitude to be dangerous to them and to the interests they represented; and they accordingly began laying plans to destroy it.

CHAPTER XX.

Doctor visits Congressman Swanson in Washington and imparts some disquieting information which causes that gentleman to pass a restless night; and later to confer with some of his brother Congressmen.

"Doctor, is this you? How in the world did you ever get to Washington? Came down to see if I am representing the folks up home properly—or just to see the capital of the country and what kind of people Congressmen and Senators and Presidents are?"

Now, Swanson did not intend to say just this to Doctor—did not mean to ask if he had come to see if he, Swanson, was doing his duty.

He had found Doctor sitting upon the broad stone steps leading up to the capital building, and the words had slipped out of his mouth before he was really aware of what he was saying—or at least had begun to do so, and were fully out before he realized the feeling that prompted them.

However, they were said smilingly, and he had taken Doctor's hand and was shaking it heartily while saying them. But when they were said, he wished them unspoken; wished it because the saying of them impressed him, with a sense of not having represented the people of his district—that is, the masses of them, the wealth producers—as he perhaps ought to have done, and as he knew Doctor must feel that he ought. For he knew Doctor too well to

imagine that he would approve if he knew, of the position he had taken upon certain measures that had been before Congress; and this suddenly running upon Doctor had recalled to his mind the people among whom Doctor lived; the poor and the sorrowful; and down in his most secret consciousness there arose a feeling—born maybe of his own sympathetic nature—that perhaps after all, the great financiers of this country and Europe were wrong; and that Mr. Mason and Mr. Nixon and Doctor were right; and that he had all the time been acting and voting in a way to increase and perpetuate the evil times and the suffering and losses of the people.

But with this feeling there came also a sense of the ludicrousness of the idea—of the fact—of Doctor having come to Washington—walking most probably—a thousand miles to instruct him upon matters of national legislation, and knowing how quick Doctor was to feel the slightest touch of redicule, feared that he might have expressed something of his sense of the absurdity and that Doctor would take his sally as unkindly meant and feel hurt at what he might think was a stab from the hand of him whom he called his friend. But any fear that Doctor would regard what he said as sarcasm and a slight put upon him, were needless.

Doctor was too deeply engrossed with the object of his mission to notice particularly the language in which he was greeted, beyond the fact that it was kindly spoken.

As Swanson had surmised, he had come a thousand miles, most of the way on foot, selling his "Preperations" to pay for food and lodging wherever possible; sleeping in the woods and fence corners when com-

pelled to do so, dodging the towns and cities for fear of being arrested as a tramp, and had come all the way to Washington to tell his friend, Congressman Swanson, what the condition of the people was, and that a portion of the laboring-men in Smithville and other towns round about, would refuse to support him for re-election unless he could satisfy them that what he was doing and had done was in their interest and for their benefit. And instead of being hurt at Swanson's request to know if he had come to see if he was properly representing his constituents, he saw only the fact that Swanson had stated truly the purpose of his visit and thus saved himself the embarrassing necessity of doing so.

He had been studying for days, nay weeks, upon how he should introduce the subject of his mission, how begin the tale which he had come to tell of how the people suffered and what the more intelligent and thoughtful among the laboring-men believed Congress should do; and now with his first greeting, his noble friend—he whom he had come to see—had made his task easy; had indeed asked him to do that which he had come to do, yet feared, not finding a way to begin doing; had asked to be told what the folks at home, the poor people, as Doctor construed it, for he knew little of any others, wanted their representative in Congress to do; and his face that seemed to Swanson to have grown pitifully thin and worn since he saw him last, lighted up with a smile that had something inexpressibly beautiful in it; as if the pure soul within had illumined the face with the light of infinite love and tenderness.

"Yes; that is what I came for," he said eagerly, holding on to Swanson's hand and glancing up into

his face and then turning his eyes away as was his wont. "Came to tell you about how the people are suffering and what they think ought to be done. I knew you would believe anything I should tell you because you know I couldn't have any reason for not telling the truth; and I am so glad to have found you. I was afraid to go in, and have been waiting here all day and watching for you. They told me this was the way Congressmen come out when they left the building, and so I waited; but I was beginning to fear you were sick and couldn't come to the capital at all; and I didn't know how I was to find you, if you were. Of course I should have found you some way, for, if you were sick I could take care of you, you know. Of course," he repeated apologetically, "I know that you would be here in Congress, if you were not sick, and so I waited; but if you had not come pretty soon, I was going to ask someone if you were sick and where I could find you."

"Come, Doctor," said Swanson, taking him by the arm, "come with me to my room. You look tired and worn out. You shall sleep to-night on my sofa as you used to do in Smithville; and to-morrow, if you like, I will find you some good comfortable place where you can feel at home and rest up and see the city at your leisure. We will talk about the things you have come to tell me of when you are rested and feel like yourself again."

Congressman Swanson's voice was a trifle husky as he spoke this to Doctor.

The devotion to the poor displayed in the long tramp of a thousand miles, and, to himself in the simple statement of intention to hunt him up and care for him if sick, touched Swanson's sympathetic heart and

he felt no shame when he walked arm in arm with Doctor down the steps of the capitol and into Pennsylvania Avenue, where they entered a street car and rode as near to Swanson's rooms as the car could take them, and then walked the short distance remaining.

The rooms which Swanson occupied were in one of the many fine buildings in Washington devoted to renting by suites or singly, to Congressmen, employees in the various Government departments, and to those who may be temporarily stopping in the city for pleasure or business.

In some of these buildings, meals can be had with the rooms; in others no meals are served in the building, and the occupants of the rented rooms eat at hotels or restaurants, as they prefer.

Congressman Swanson was in the habit of taking his meals at a restaurant in an adjoining block; but on this occasion, he called the porter, who had charge of the building and sent him with an order for two meals to be brought to his rooms, and when they came, compelled Doctor to sit down with him, and, as he mentally expressed it, "filled him up" with what he rightfully surmised to be the first really full meal he had eaten in a good while—what was in fact the best and biggest meal Doctor could remember to have ever eaten. For Swanson had ordered pretty nearly everything he could think of, and the waiter had not failed to bring the entire list.

After supper, or what in Washington, is called dinner, because, although eaten at about the usual supper hour in the country, is the heartiest meal of the day—after dinner then, and after the waiter had carried away the dishes, Swanson tried to induce

Doctor to lie down upon the sofa at once and rest, but he appeared not willing to do so.

He had come for a purpose and that purpose he was anxious to accomplish—must accomplish now that it was possible, before he rested or slept. He wanted to tell his friend, his noble friend, his powerful friend Congressman Swanson, what he had seen and knew of the condition of the people, and what they were thinking and saying. He wanted to tell it because he had not a doubt that once it was told, his powerful friend would act in such a way as to bring relief to the suffering poor; that he would do all that any one man could do in that direction.

To let the people continue to suffer for a single hour while he took a rest not imperatively needed, would have appeared to Doctor the blackest of treason to the poor; and now that he was in the presence of one whom he believed had the power to do something for their relief, he would not sleep, would not rest, would not have eaten only that Swanson had insisted upon it, until he had done all that was possible for him to do—namely, tell the tale of poverty and suffering and woe, of sickness and sorrow and death, that had followed in the wake of the evil laws passed by men whose greed for riches left no room in their hearts where justice or mercy could find a lodgement.

And beside this, Doctor wanted to tell his friend of the proposed action of the laboringmen of his district, that he might defend himself against the danger which threatened from this quarter; not indeed by opposing them but by showing them that he was in fullest sympathy with them and was doing all in his power to obtain from Congress all that they asked or desired.

For Doctor did not conceive it possible that Mr.

Swanson held views or had cast votes in direct antagonism to the views held by Nixon and others like him, for that anything or anybody could induce him to act in harmony with those who had framed the legislation from which had come such awful disaster to the producing and business interests of the country, such fearful losses to the many, such awful suffering to the poor.

Doctor's brain was too weak, and Doctor's powers of imagination too undeveloped, to enable him to comprehend how it is that those who had framed the laws through whose action, panic and ruin and sore disaster had come upon the masses while they who framed or dictated the laws, grew rich beyond competition should be the ones who could be most safely relied upon to point the way out and to keep out of such troubles. He had not, I say, the ability to understand how those who had ruined the country and profited by the ruin they had wrought had thus proven themselves best fitted to shape the future policy of the government, and he could not, therefore, understand how men like Mr. Swanson, who were really desirous of doing justice to the people, could follow those who had wrought this ruin or see in them a wisdom and patriotism greater than that possessed by other men who proposed an opposite course of legislation for the future. And so seeing that his friend would listen, he told of how the working-men, were still out of employment because the factories and shops were closed, and how these were not running because the farmers got so little for their products that they could not buy things as they had done when money was plenty and times good; how many of the workingmen had become

tramps and thieves, and how their families were broken up and their homes gone.

"I've seen 'em myself, Mr. Swanson," he said. "I've seen 'em begging for work that they could not get, and I've seen little children crying for bread that none of us could give 'em without we stole it; and I have seen women holding their little babes to their breasts to warm them when there was no fire in the house and no money to buy coal with; and it isn't any wonder that the men become tramps and criminals; the only wonder is that they are as patient and good as they are. There is Mr. Mason now, and Miss Jennie living in an old shell of a house not fit for cattle to stay in, in real cold weather, and but for Mr. Nixon, they wouldn't have had that; but Mr. Mason would have been sent to the Poor House, and the Lord only knows what would have become of Miss Jennie."

"Great God! Doctor, you don't mean that, do you? Say you don't mean that! I never supposed anything of that kind could have happened to them. How did it occur—I thought they had a clear title to the cottage they lived in?"

Swanson had started to his feet on hearing this thing of the Masons, and now stood looking at Doctor with an expression upon his face that almost frightened him.

"Didn't they write to you about that?" he inquired in surprise; "why I supposed you knew all about that." And he related the circumstances connected with the loss of their cottage by the Masons as he had gathered it from them and others.

"The infernal old villian!" blurted out Swanson, as a full understanding of Hardiman's acts and intentions dawned upon him. "He ought to have his neck wrung,

and I think I will do it. The old scoundrel; and to think I never heard of it!"

He was pacing the floor now with angry strides.

"Of course," he said, stopping and addressing Doctor, "of course I heard of Hardiman's failure at the time it occurred, and I knew that this would throw Jennie—that is, Miss Mason—out of employment; but I never dreamed that any one could rob them of their house, or that Miss Mason could not find some other equally desirable position. Why did you not write me about it, Doctor?"

I supposed Mr. Mason, or Mr. Nixon, or Miss Jennie herself, had done so, and there are so many, so many thousands needing help, I thought you could not help them all. Of course I see now why they did not write. They were afraid you would think them asking for help, and they were too proud to do that And then there are so many; they knew you must have a great many whom you were helping, and they would not ask it of you. I don't see though, why folks should not ask their friends for help when they need it. If friends are not to help each other when they need help, what is friendship anyway? They ought not to have been so afraid to let you know. They ought to have come to you at once and let you help them what you could, as I know you would have been glad to do."

"Of course I would. There is no one in the world I would be more glad to help than Mr. Mason and his daughter."

"Of course there isn't!" echoed Doctor. "And there is no one they think more of than they do of you—though they don't understand you quite as well as I do," he added, remembering that Mr. Mason was likely to be the workingmen's candidate for Congress

in opposition to Mr. Swanson. "Folks had not ought to be so afraid to ask their friends for assistance. It isn't fair to a friend to suppose he would not be glad to help you when you need it."

Doctor was himself the most fearful mortal alive of letting his friends put themselves out for him, but he was not aware of the fact; probably because so few people had ever offered to do it. But like many another loyal heart he felt it a pleasure to do for others; and in theory, held that others would take a like pleasure in doing for him, being careful always not to put them to the test, but firmly clinging to the belief that if he did, his theory would be proven true.

Doctor slept on Swanson's sofa that night, and Swanson slept not at all, or but very little.

Doctor's tale of the poverty and suffering of the people, affected him strongly; and Doctor's theory of the cause and cure for these had made an impression upon him which he could not dispel.

For Doctor had explained his views at some length —saying always that "this was what Mr. Nixon or Mr. Mason thought;" which was no less true than that it was what he himself thought also; for none were better posted or had clearer understanding of the cause and remedies for the evil times than Doctor, and he had expressed himself so simply and yet so clearly that Swanson had a better understanding of the whole question of economics and of the duties of the government than he had ever had before; and though not fully convinced, perhaps not quite willing to be convinced of the wisdom of the plans for relief proposed by Doctor and the workingmen, he yet felt himself unable to gainsay them, and was troubled by the thought that if they were right, nothing but evil could

come to the country from the legislation to which his party was pledged, and upon supporting which, by voice and vote, he knew depended his re-nomination to Congress by that party.

"I wish there was no such thing as politics," he muttered, tossing about upon his bed, "or party discipline or party caucuses. A man isn't a free man who is bound by party to act or vote as his party dictates. Party ties; yes, indeed, party chains, party manacles, party thumb-screws, the party lash. They are all there, and all in use. How could we keep the party together without them? And if the party failed to hold together, then we would go out of office and another party that is no better, would come in. I wonder if things are as bad as Doctor thinks? And the Masons! Damn Old Hardiman! I wish I had him where I could get at him for five minutes. I'd fetch him to time, and I will do it yet, if it loses me my re-election—the old villain! I'll talk with Jones and Brown and Smith of our party again about these financial matters and see if something cannot be done in the direction suggested by Doctor and Nixon and the rest."

And he did.

The next day, or the next but one, he got Smith and Brown and Jones, all members of Congress, up in his room for a smoke and a glass of wine, and cautiously brought the conversation round to the financial question and a little anxiously led them to express an opinion regarding it."

He even went so far, hoping to get an honest expression of opinion from his colleagues, as to declare that he "believed the Greenbackers were more than half right, and that the proper thing to do was to abolish the National Banks, and issue the money needed to do

the business of the country direct to the people; paying it out in meeting the expenses of Government and receiving it back again (redeeming it) in payment of import duties and internal revenue taxes."

And Smith and Jones and Brown united in saying as with one voice:

"Oh, yes, that's good doctrine but what is to become of the party if we were to seriously propose any such thing as that? Where will we get our campaign funds? Not only the banks, but every last corporation in the country of any importance, or that is able to help us in the coming Presidential election would drop us like hot cakes and go with the other fellows. We would be stranded high and dry, salted down and packed away in a box before the campaign was half over.

"No use, Swanson—we understand how you are fixed up in your district with a lot of workingmen and farmers yelping at your heels and demanding more greenbacks, and we are sorry if they are going to give you trouble next election, but your only safe course is to stand by the banks. If you do not, you stand no chance whatever. They have the power to force every business man in your district to cut you, and they will do it if you go back on them.

"The party is tied to its present policy on the financial issue and it cannot get away from it; and that policy, as you know, is to destroy what greenbacks remain just as soon as it can be done without provoking the people to open rebellion, and not to issue more greenbacks as your folks are demanding. Our only consolation is that the corporations have got the other fellows as tight as they have us, and that our constituents cannot accuse our party of being any more

in favor of hard money and hard times than the other party is."

"For my part," said Brown, "I have ceased to think much about the financial queston. When I first took my seat in Congress, I did study it a good deal and came to the conclusion that the policy of our party was wrong and ought to be changed. But it couldn't be done; and I gave up trying and now I just watch our leaders on that question and follow them."

"That's the only safe way to do," said Smith. "If you get out of line with your party, you are gone sure. The people won't listen to you or sustain you if you oppose the party policy. But if you follow it you can always satisfy your constituents by pointing to the fact and saying: 'Gentlemen, I may not have done what you or what I conceived to be the wisest thing that could have been done; but I have done what the majority of the party to which you and I belong, wanted done; and what they considered necessary to be done in order to prevent the country from falling into the hands of our political opponents —than which no other disaster that could befall us is to be compared:' That fetches 'em every time, and it leaves us in office; and since the other party would do exactly the same thing, for the banks and other corporations that we are doing, I don't see why we should sacrifice ourselves for the sake of a theory that might not work after all, if we tried it."

Doctor was not present on the occasion when the conversation narrated above took place.

He had accomplished the purpose of his mission when he had imparted the information he had come to impart to his generous and powerful friend, and the second morning after his arrival, had departed before

Swanson was up, leaving a note on the table, thanking him for his kindness and saying that he had started for home.

He had, in fact, left thus unceremoniously lest his friend Swanson should insist upon paying his fare back by rail, and so put to test his own theories of what a friend would be glad to do for a friend in need.

CHAPTER XXI

Congress adjourns and the members go home to mend their political fences. Why Mr. Swanson does not call upon Jennie Mason. Is Jennie in love with Mr. Nixon?

Congress had adjourned and its members were at home among their constituents, and looking to their political fences.

They had adjourned without doing anything for the relief of the stricken industries of the country, but instead, had made more secure and permanent the shackles already linked about the energies of the people.

In the accomplishment of this work, Democrats and Republicans had joined hands and acted as one party, but had concealed the fact from the general public by fierce contests over trivial matters and by struggles to gain some party advantage, the one over the other to the end that this or that leader or party might receive a larger portion of the spoils. And now they had adjourned and gone home.

A presidential campaign was approaching. The regular biennial struggle to obtain or retain seats in Congress was at hand, and naturally, everybody who expected to be a candidate for re-election, wanted to be at home where he could council with his friends, watch his enemies and prepare for the coming contest in which he had so much at stake.

Swanson was at home and had been fully posted upon the condition of affairs in his district by the local political leaders of his party—the same men who had managed his former campaign and brought it to so successful an issue.

The labor organizations, that two years before had been in the form of trade and labor unions, had now, under the leadership of Nixon, assumed, as the reader already knows, the shape of Political Clubs, bent upon independent political action; and these organizations had spread and increased until not only the district, but the state, was in a ferment, and an element of uncertainty had thus been injected into the political situation which necessitated caution and skill on the part of the bosses in the management of their respective forces.

Although a week and more had elapsed since his return from Washington Mr. Swanson had not called upon the Masons, nor had he met Mr. Nixon: neither did he intend to call upon the one or desire to meet the other.

His connection, if not his friendship for them was broken, and broken by them in a way which he felt was not altogether complimentary to himself. He did not exactly blame anyone for this. At least, he told himself that he did not—told himself that if anybody was to blame he was as much so as any one, ending his meditations upon the subject by declaring—for he was becoming something of a fatalist—that it was only what was to be, and that there was nothing to be done, and no use in thinking any further about it; that it was like the political situation and the condition of things generally; something that had come about somehow, nobody knew exactly why or how it

could have been different although nearly everybody wished that it were different.

He had written Miss Jennie Mason a letter from Washington some weeks before in which he had declared that he loved her and made her an offer of marriage; and not altogether to his surprise, and perhaps not greatly to his sorrow, had received a reply thanking him for the honor conferred, but telling him that she did not love him as a woman should love the man she married, and so declined his very flattering offer.

And Swanson never knew whether he regretted having made the offer or not, or whether having made it, he regretted that it was not accepted.

He knew that his love for Miss Mason was not of a very passionate character. That it was, in fact, rather respect and admiration than what is generally called love.

He knew that his own ideas of right and duty were less exalted than were hers, and that he was incapable of sacrificing his own comfort, desires and ambitions for the good of others in the same degree that he knew her to be; and while, in moments of exaltation, he felt that her presence and her love would be a blessed aid in enabling him to lead the highest life possible to him, so also in his weaker moments, he could not help the feeling that she would possibly, and from this very fact, be a hindrance to him in his efforts to attain, or maintain, the position of ease and affluence, which he had learned to covet.

He had made his offer of marriage under the pressure of feelings called in activity by Doctor's story of the outrageous conduct of Hardiman toward the gentle girl whom he so much respected and so nearly loved,

and if she had accepted him he would have been happy in her acceptance—certainly for a time—possibly for all time—but then, on the other hand he did not very deeply regret her refusal to do so.

His pride was wounded a trifle but not badly. He had too perfect a knowledge of himself, of his own worth and unworth to make it possible for any young woman to stab him deeply through his pride. Her refusal made him a trifle less confident of himself for the moment, a little less inclined to jollity for a few days, a little lonely when he thought of returning to Smithville after adjournment, but he never once thought of himself as broken hearted or without hope and ambition in life.

Nothing of the sort.

He felt rather that he was in the hands of fate and that he had done his part; had given himself all the chance there was of coming under the good influence of a pure and noble woman, and that it was not to be, and since it was not to be, he was not accountable: but at liberty to make other plans and accept other means for getting the most comfort and pleasure possible out of life consistent with a reasonable regard for the rights of others, and to the extent which his own, as he sometimes expressed it, "infernally" sympathetic nature would admit of.

After his return from the capitol, and when he had received from the local bosses—with such coloring as they chose to give to it—a statement of the extent to which the movement, headed in his own district by Nixon and Mason was spreading, the latter having been nominated by the Independent Labor Party for Congress, he could not help feeling a trifle better toward them, or refrain from expressing it in words,

which, at heart, he felt to be unjust and untrue. But in the main, he credited them and those who were acting with them, with pure motives, and if he did or did not, believe in the theories which they advanced, he did not denounce them, as did others, as destructive of all government, neither suggest "sending to the stone pile" those who believed in and advocated them.

He knew that he would be expected to oppose those ideas from the rostrum in his race for re-election to Congress; that indeed his re-nomination at the hands of his party hinged upon his readiness to do so; and he knew that he should do it. Knew that he should do it, not because he thoroughly and earnestly disapproved of them, or that he fully and heartily believed the opposite, but because he had no very well established views in the case and because fate seemed to compel it. And the fact that fate in this case took the form of the party bosses, did not appear to him to affect the case one way or the other.

What mattered it to him in what form Fate appeared or through whom Fate spoke? It was the fact and not the surroundings which he saw; and the fact was, he felt himself compelled to do as he proposed. And he called this fate, and yielded to fate as to one too powerful to be contended against.

And Miss Jennie Mason—what of her?

Did she feel no regrets at what she had done? Had she never loved Horace Swanson? Were there not moments, days, when she regretted having refused his offer of marriage?

Possibly.

Probably.

It would be a very strong spirit indeed, that without

experience in love or marriage, could live in the midst of such wretched surroundings as those to which Jennie Mason was chained, and not contrast them wistfully with those which Congressman Swanson could give her.

And she had been in love with him at one time—or if not, then so near the brink of love that a declaration from him would have plunged her headlong into the abyss with no possible chance of ever again regaining the standing upon the banks above.

But that declaration had not been made then; and when it did come, and come unexpectedly and through the prosaic every-day-alike-and-no-romance-about-it channel of the United States mail, it was too late to elicit the response asked for.

The bird that had fluttered so prettily in Jennie Mason's heart with half intent to build its nest and make its home there, had taken flight and flown away, and not till other voice than that of Horace Swanson should beseech it to return would it come back and build and rest and rear its young in that fair temple.

And yet Jennie had hesitated long over her reply.

It was not in the nature of things that an offer of marriage from a man in the position of Congressman, to a girl with such surroundings and prospects as Jennie Mason's, should not open up to her some vistas of tempting beauty, incite some longings to stroll through the green field and along the pleasant paths that arose in her imagination.

Horace Swanson was a gentleman—she knew that. He was one instinctively and by education. His sympathies were quick, his nature gallant, his sense of justice stronger than that of many men. All this she knew and felt, and it was these qualities that, coupled

with his grace of manner had started the bird to fluttering in her heart in the other days, when she lived in the prettier cottage with her father and wrote all day in Hardiman's office, when Swanson walked home with her from church or spent whole evenings in this poor little parlor—the parlor that seemed so poorly furnished then, but now so elegant as she compared it to her present surroundings.

But she knew now that there was something lacking in Mr. Swanson's character, which made it impossible that she should ever look up to and lean upon him as the one man above all others whom she could love and trust.

It was not that in her heart she accused him of having betrayed the workingmen, for she felt that such an accusation would be unjust. It was not that he had betrayed them, but that he seemed incapable of entering into their thoughts and feelings, of understanding their needs, of rising to those higher heights from which the strong look upon the strong with neither fear nor envy, and upon the weak without contempt or willingness to profit by their weakness; those heights where courage is as the air we breathe, and love for our fellows, the pure water with which we quench our thirst.

So she had declined his offer of marriage, not without some feelings of regret both at the pain she supposed she was giving him, and at thus shutting with her own hands, the door that had opened to her and through which she might have passed from poverty and all that poverty means to such as she, to affluence and ease and social honors.

Did she act wisely?

Who knows?

Were there other influences known or unknown to herself, prompting her to reject Mr. Swanson's suit?

Perhaps.

Who can tell, if she could not?

Or would not?

She could not have been entirely oblivious of the fact that Nixon loved her; that he was devoted to her and ready to make any sacrifice for her which she could or would accept.

But Nixon had never told his love in words, seldom in looks, but only in such acts as might equally become a lover or a friend.

For Nixon, bold even to aggressiveness in defence of what he conceived to be his rights and the rights of his fellows, was timid as a girl in the matter of his love.

Holding himself the equal of most men in natural ability, and fearless of meeting in defense of the rights of the people any who opposed, he thought himself almost totally lacking in those qualities which would awaken the tender passion in the breast of woman.

He did not know that there is nothing which women so much admire in men as intellectual strength and high moral and physical courage. And it never occurred to him that Jennie Mason looked upon him as the embodiment of these noble qualities, and of gentleness and generosity, as well.

True, he saw her daily at meals and often spent the evening or a portion of it in the company of herself and the father. True that he assisted her, and that she permitted him to assist her in some of the labors which, as cook and housekeeper, occupied her time. If he ever left the house without having seen that there was water drawn for her use during the interval

between meals, or wood split, or placed where it would be convenient to her hand, if he ever, while engaged in conversation with his fellow boarders, left the house without seeing to all these things, he never failed to remember it later, nor was in too great a hurry to turn back and attend to it. And she permitted him to do these and many similar favors.

She walked with him to Labor meetings; she strolled out with him now and again on pleasant Sunday afternoons, and would doubtless have accompanied him to church but that neither of them any longer had clothes considered sufficiently respectable for that. And in all this he saw only a sisterly confidence and regard, and sooner than have imposed upon this, John Nixon would have cut off his right hand and maimed himself for life.

And so whether Jennie loved him or not, or whether loving him she was aware of it or not, there seemed little prospect of them ever coming to an understanding about matters.

CHAPTER XXII

The canvass. Swanson again upon the stump, and again the victor in his race for Congress. Peters also retains his position and his fees, but changes his bosses. What has become of Doctor?

The whole country was aroused and excited over the partisan issues upon which the "Bosses" had again succeeded in dividing the masses of the people.

Both parties—"The party of great moral ideas," and the other party that claimed to "always have the interest of the common people at heart," had met in National Convention and adopted platforms essentially the same in all material respects; both being bids for the support of the National Banks and the other great corporations of the country. Upon the stump, however, and through the press, each attacked the other with the most intense virulence and bitterness, seeking by every conceivable means to arouse sectional hatred, personal animosities and partisan prejudices.

But while their national platforms were essentially the same and in most of the states were made to differ only upon local affairs, in the state of which most of the characters introduced to the reader through the narrative were citizens, the state platforms of these two old parties were made to differ widely. The party of "extra respectability" made its state platform to agree upon national issues with that put forward by it in national convention. But the other great

party in state convention adopted a platform almost identically the same as that of the Laboring men, or Greenback Party, which had also held a convention and put forth a declaration of principles and nominated candidates.

In fact this young party had grown so rapidly and become so strong in this state that the leaders of both old parties had become seriously alarmed, and the Democratic leaders, with the consent and approval of their eastern bosses decided to appear to accept, for their party, in this state, the declaration of principles put forward by the disaffected of both old parties now rapidly rallying to form the Greenback Party. They were pledged by their national platform, and through secret promises made to the banks, to support any demands they might make upon Congress for further legislation in the interest of the corporations; but they sought to conceal this from the people in this state, and spoke to them from a state platform in which they promised the relief demanded by the dissatisfied masses of the people.

Then, having outwardly put themselves in accord with the reform party in the state, they cunningly went a step farther, and in all legislative and senatorial districts, where the Laboringmen or Greenbackers had nominated men they endorsed them and so bound them with obligations and promises, or so appealed to their ambitions, or so deceived them with false pledges and pretense of deserving reform that when the contest was over, the legislature convened and a ballot for United States Senator ordered, then men were found voting, not for a man who was generally in sympathy with the people, not for one who would have truly and faithfully represented their interests in the United States

Senate, but for the candidate of the party which had endorsed them that it might use them.

These men were never again heard of in the politics of the state, but the man whom they had helped to elect to the Senate of the United States when he had taken his seat, kindly sent each of them a printed speech which he claimed to have delivered upon the floor of the Senate, in which he advocated the reforms demanded by those who had been their supporters and friends. And thereafter acted in full harmony with his party in support of the demands of the banking and other corporate interests of this country and Europe.

The further result of the cunning displayed by the leaders of this party in appearing to accept and approve the platform of principles of the reformers was to almost entirely nullify their efforts at organization.

Although Nixon and others were active, speaking constantly and scattering papers and leaflets sustaining their views upon the financial question, they could accomplish little since they were everywhere met by the leaders and whippers-in of the party that had stolen their platform with the assertion:

"Oh, we are with you, we agree with you. There is no need of a third party to carry out the reforms demanded. Our platform is the same as yours and you can secure all that the farmers and laboring men are asking for through the Democratic party."

And when the fact that these were national issues and could be settled only through the Congress and Senate of the nation was pointed out, together with the fact that upon these questions the national platform of the Democratic party with that of the Republican

party, and both with the demands of the corporations, the answer was ready.

Oh, well," they said, "we will fix that next time. Give us time to educate our folks down East a little, and everything will be all right. We are the party of the common people, and can be trusted to do them justice."

And the people were deceived, and voted with them, and this party of false pretenses carried the state, secured the United States Senator, prevented the voters from uniting any considerable numbers in the new party and ended by delivering them, bound hand and foot, into the power of their enemies.

The cunning of the politicians had prevailed; the object which they sought to accomplish had been accomplished. The people were again broken upon the wheel, and the corporations were again securely in the saddle.

Neither in this state nor in any other, neither in any national convention nor in Congress nor the Senate of the United States did the Democratic party ever make another currency reform platform, nor seek to keep the people from out the toils of the money power.

Out of all this excitement, out of the confusion and the turmoil and the filth, Horace Swanson emerged, again the victor, secure in his seat in Congress for another two years.

Just how it was accomplished, or why he was not overthrown in the contest which had left the state in the hands of the opposing party by a round majority, the chronicler of these events does not know, or at the best, can only surmise.

Swanson was personally popular.

He carried about him an air of good fellowship that

drew men to him. He was sympathetic and responded readily to all appeals for help from whatever quarter they came. He went down into his pocket with equal readiness in support of home charities and foreign missions. The ladies admired his graceful manners and manly form; the laboringmen could not be made to believe him other than their friend even though he did not think as they did upon these questions; and when he made it appear to them that it was a close race between him and the candidate of the other old party many who had intended to vote for Mason on the reform party ticket changed their minds and voted for Swanson. And lastly, Swanson had the support and backing of shrewd politicians; politicians as unscrupulous as shrewd, and well supplied with the sinews of war.

Swanson told himself that it was fate, and he did not enquire too particularly into the causes which had induced fate to look upon him with favor.

It was because it was to be. That was enough. Why bother himself about the details?

He was glad that he was elected; sorry for some things that had been done to accomplish it; or rather was sorry that it had been necessary that such things should be done, and was determined to forget all unpleasant things that had been done during the campaign, and not to do any more unpleasant things in the future than he should be compelled to do.

He had met Nixon but once during the campaign.

Unintended by him, and perhaps so by Nixon, both had appointments to speak at the same place at the same hour, and on meeting, Nixon had at once challenged him to a joint discussion, which he had been ashamed to decline, and so had accepted with

apparent readiness, and out of which he had come in better feather than he had feared; for while he knew and to himself acknowledged, that Nixon had beaten him badly in the argument, he had sustained himself finely with jest and anecdote and so kept the crowd yelling and thus covered his defeat in debate.

Peters he saw often: a great deal too often, in fact, for he disliked Peters exceedingly and the more he saw of him, the more he disliked and despised him.

There was certain work, however, that the bosses declared had to be done that Peters or someone like him could do better than anybody else; and so he was kept upon the roll of workers and paid partly in ready cash but principally in promises which the bosses intended to keep if convenient.

He had been rewarded for his work two years previous by being made Bailiff in one of the courts and had subsisted and grown more obsequious, self-important and treacherous off the emoluments of his petty office and so was a better and more ready tool for the use of the bosses than formerly, and being himself aware of the fact, felt that he had reason to expect a better job after the present election was over.

As, however, the party which he served, although successful in the District, was defeated in the County, it had no jobs of any kind to give, and Peters saw himself in imminent danger of being compelled to return to honest work for a living; something, which after having done so little of for two years, appeared very distasteful to him, and at once he began negotiating with the successful party for permission to retain his job as Bailiff, offering in return, to serve the bosses of that party as faithfully as he had formerly done the others, and knowing the use they might have

for just such a man as he was, they consented, and Peters was happy in the position which he thus retained, and in the consciousness which he had of his ability as a strategist and shrewd politician.

Mr. Swanson did not meet Mr. Mason or Jennie during the campaign, nor, indeed during the entire time he spent in Smithville before the re-assembling of Congress, and his consequent return to Washington.

Although the candidate of the reform party for Congress, Mr. Mason's physical disabilities prevented him from moving about among the people, and naturally, Mr. Swanson did not call at his house.

He saw Jennie once upon the opposite side of the street, dressed in a clean but badly faded calico dress, and evidently on her way to some market or grocery to purchase provisions of some kind; but if she saw him, she gave no intimation of the fact; indeed, could not properly do so at that distance, and Swanson made no effort to approach nearer.

He noticed how poorly she was dressed, and his wrath at Hardiman was newly aroused, and he promised himself, as he had often done before, to "even things up for the Masons with the old villain yet," and fully intended to do so, but the exigencies of the campaign occupied his attention completely during its continuence, and after it was over, although he made numerous inquiries as to Hardiman's whereabouts, he could learn nothing regarding him beyond the fact that his wife had died shortly after his failure, and that Hardiman himself had left town and gone—no one knew where.

The factory which Hardiman had formerly owned and run, and which had passed into the hands of a receiver when he failed, was, now that after two years

there was a prospect of getting a settlement through the courts—reported about to be sold to parties who would start the works going again; which report was hailed with joy by hundreds of workingmen and every merchant in town.

And this was all Swanson could learn, and all he did toward evening up with Hardiman before returning to Washington and taking his seat as a member of Congress.

He returned too without having seen or heard of Doctor.

Since the time he was in Washington, walking a thousand miles to acquaint Congressman Swanson with the poverty of the people, and warn him of the danger which threatened his prospects for re-election, he had not been seen nor heard from by that gentleman; nor so far as he could learn, by anybody in Smithville.

If he could have been satisfied that Doctor was all right and had simply switched off somewhere on the road between Washington and Smithville for the purpose of converting some back-woods settlement to his views upon reform questions, or even in saving a town from an epidemic of sickness by the gift of his preparation of herbs, Swanson would have been glad to miss Doctor's presence.

He knew that Doctor would not approve of the course he had pursued in the campaign—would, in fact, be broken-hearted at the sight and hearing of his powerful friend opposing not only the candidate but the principles of the reform party; and although he would have, and did, console himself by telling himself that it was something he could not help, or could not help without permitting a worse enemy of the people, namely, the candidate of the opposition party to get

his seat in Congress; although he would have so explained the necessity of doing as he did to Doctor had he been there, he was yet glad not to have to so explain.

Had he known that instead of enlightening the minds of the people by talks upon the money question, or healing their bodies with his nostrum, Doctor had fallen into the hands of the law, been arrested as a tramp and put to breaking stone upon the streets of a Pennsylvania town, he would have felt less cheerful over his absence and would, no doubt, have taken immediate and energetic steps to secure his liberation.

This, however, he did not know, for Doctor had no possible means of communicating the fact.

True he had a nickle and two or three copper cents in his pocket when arrested, but these were not sufficient, in the opinion of the justice before whom he was brought for trial, upon the charge of being a vagrant, to justify his claim of having paid and of intending to pay for whatever he consumed, and so while sentencing him to thirty days on the streets, forgot to order the constable who had made the arrest, to return to him the nickel and pennies which he had taken from him while searching him for deadly weapons.

And as the constable also forgot it, Doctor was left without so much as would buy a postal card wherewith to notify his noble friend Congressman Swanson, of his sad predicament and need of assistance.

It was not that Doctor did not tell the boss that was put over the band of wretched convicts, victims of "the best financial system the world ever saw" that he had a friend in Washington, a Congressman who would take pleasure in paying his fine and securing his release, for Doctor did tell him.

Not to have told it under the circumstances would have been to be disloyal to his friend, his noble friend, who agreed with him that friends ought not to be afraid or ashamed to ask assistance of friends in times of need; and this was a case in which Doctor recognized the fact that he really and truly needed a friend's help.

If it had been only a matter of going without food for a day or even two days, or of sleeping out of doors at a time when the weather was not too severe, Doctor would not have considered it a case of sufficient importance to justify troubling his friend with, but this was one that did justify it, because it was one in which he could not hope to help himself.

Accordingly, he had mentioned the fact of his having a friend who would help him if he knew; and asked the boss to secure the return of his nickle, or at least of the pennies, so that he might write his friend in Washington to come to his assistance; but the boss only regarded it as a joke and laughed at the idea.

A tramp with friends in Washington!

A Congressman the friend of a tramp!

The idea was too ridiculous entirely.

So Doctor continued to break stones on the streets of a Christian town.

Swung the heavy hammers that were almost more than he could lift, through the long hours of the long, hot days, until it seemed to him that he could lift it not once more to save his life, yet at the gruff command of a brutal boss, continued still to work on. Serving out his sentence as a tramp, upon the streets of a Christain town, in a country whose citizens boasted of their freedom, and of the sacrifices which they had

made of life and treasure to strike the shackles of slavery from the limbs of another race.

And his noble friend, member of Congress, from the —th District of the state of——, congratulated himself that Doctor was not by to disapprove of the position which fate in the form of party, compelled him to take with regard to the reformatory movements inaugurated by the laboring men and farmers of the country.

CHAPTER XXIII

Introduces "The Silent Member," to the reader. Miss Jennie Mason's explanation of the uses of money. Agitate, educate and organize.

"It's our only hope," said Nixon; "we must educate the people upon these questions.

"Money is simply the tool by means of which the people transfer the title to commodities, to the thing which they produce by their labor, from one person to another, just as a wagon or a train of cars is the tool whereby they transfer the visible thing—the commodity itself—from one person or one portion of the country to another.

"Such is the only use which the wealth-producers have for money; but for this purpose it is indispensable, since, without it they can no more exchange wealth than they could without wagons or steam cars.

"Money is an imperative necessity to them; and for government to reserve to itself the sole and exclusive right to make money, and then refuse, or fail to supply it at cost to those who, having produced wealth in one form, wish to exchange it with other producers for wealth in other forms, is as great a wrong to the producer as it would be for government to reserve to itself the exclusive right to make wagons and then refuse to supply the people with wagons at cost price, or to make the wagons and sell them at cost to a few

men only, and compel the rest to buy of these at such advance as they choose to ask."

"Your comparison is a good one," said Mr. Mason. "John Stuart Mill defines money to be a kind of ticket or order, which the holder may present at any shop, and which entitles him to a certain amount of any commodity that the shop-keeper may have on sale.

"Those may not be the exact words which Mr. Mill uses, but they are very nearly the same, and certainly carry his exact meaning.

"The idea is, that money is a kind of certificate which says in effect that the holder of it has rendered a service to the community in some way; that he has produced something, which, not being in need of himself, he wished to exchange for something else, and had transferred his title to it to another, taking this certificate, this money, as evidence of the fact, and that now, having found the article he desires, and which is for sale, he is entitled to take it for his own use at the price asked, upon transferring his certificate, or money, to the party owning the article for sale; who, in his turn, has the right to take any other article for sale by anybody else at the price asked, by transferring the certificate to him."

"I think that is the best definition of money I have yet heard," returned Nixon. "The right to compel any one to accept the certificate, or money, in payment for anything offered for sale, constitutes the legal tender quality of money, and the justice of making it legal tender, or of compelling any citizen to accept it in payment of a debt, or of anything sold, is based upon the supposed fact of which the certificate is the evidence, that the holder of the certificate has produced something of equal value to the thing he has

now purchased, but has transferred the thing which he produced to some other citizen, getting nothing of value in return, but taking instead, this certificate as evidence of the fact. He is therefore entitled to receive that much wealth on surrender of his certificate when he can find what he wants offered for sale by another citizen; this person in turn, receiving the certificate as evidence that he is now the one who has produced and transferred his wealth without as yet receiving an equivalent."

"In that view of the case," put in one of the others —they were all of them Mason's boarders, and were at the supper-table—"In that case, I don't see how any body who has produced nothing could get any of these certificates or money; that is, unless they stole them, or had them given to 'em."

"They certainly cannot get it honestly—except it is given to them—unless they produce something of value; something which some one is willing to give something for. Since no one is entitled to receive something for nothing, it is impossible that anyone should rightfully hold any of these certificates called money, unless he has produced something which he has sought to exchange for some other thing.

""Since he cannot exchange that which he has produced directly for that which he desires, he lets some one have it, and takes a certificate to that effect; when he has found what he wants he takes it, provided he can agree with the owners as to its value. If they cannot agree on its value, he goes somewhere else, still looking for the article he wants. If they do agree he transfers his certificate or so much of it as has been agreed on, and takes the article.

"While he held the certificate, it was evidence of an

exchange begun but not completed. When it passed out of his hand, it indicates that the exchange has been completed; and that, having received something which he regarded as of equal value to the thing he produced and transferred to another, nothing further is due him from any one."

"That looks sort of reasonable, but I don't think I quite understand it yet."

The last speaker was a new boarder, who had never before thought or heard anybody talk about these questions; and so was a little slow in comprehending.

"Let me see if I can't illustrate what you gentlemen mean," broke in Miss Jennie, who stood waving a brush above the table to keep the flies away, and watching to see that the dishes of food were properly passed about. "If I can illustrate it so that the rest can understand it; then I shall be certain that I understand it, too; and I wish to understand these things very much. I think everybody ought tc understand them, for everybody is certainly interested in them."

"All right, Jennie, go ahead," said her father; "I wouldn't wonder if you could make it clearer than any of us."

Jennie laughed a little and said she didn't know as she could, but she was not going to let the men do all the talking, anyway, and so would try.

"Here now," she began, "is Mr. Nixon, who is making and repairing wagons; then here is Mr. Brown, who works in the saw-mill; and just outside of town lives Mr. Jones, who raises vegetables and things, and here are papa and I, who cook for all you men what Mr. Jones and his neighbors raise and bring to town to sell.

"Now, Mr. Nixon has made a wagon, but has no use

for the wagon himself, he has nothing to haul in it, and it isn't the kind of conveyance he would want to ask a young lady to go riding in. And anyway he has no horses to drive to it, so he wants to exchange the wagon for other things. He has to pay papa and me for his board, and he has to buy things to make more wagons of, and he has to have clothes to wear. But papa and I don't want the wagon, and Mr. Brown does not, and Mr. Jones does not, and so Mr. Nixon puts a card with "For sale" written on it upon the wagon, and runs it out in front of his shop, near the street, where everybody that passes will see it; and by and by a farmer comes along who has just sold a big load of wheat and buys the wagon and pays Mr. Nixon the money he got for his wheat. The farmer has thus exchanged his wheat for a new wagon; Mr. Nixon has parted with his wagon, but has not got the wheat; has not got anything to build another wagon with; has not got anything that he wanted in exchange for the wagon; he has just got some certificates which show that he did make a wagon worth as much as a load of wheat, and that he let the man who raised the wheat have the wagon, and took the certificates which some body had given him for the wheat.

"Now, so long as Mr. Nixon keeps those certificates, money, he can prove by them that he has as yet got nothing for his wagon, and that somebody else now has the wagon, and that he is entitled to as much wealth in some other form as will compensate him for the labor and material expended on the wagon. So he goes to Mr. Brown, who saws lumber and they agree upon what the material for another wagon is worth, and Mr. Nixon says he will take it, and he gives Mr. Brown some money—some of the certificates

which the farmer got for his wheat, and gave him to prove that he had made and parted with a wagon; and Mr. Brown gave papa and me some of these, because we have boarded him; and some he keeps to prove that he has not yet received back the full value of his lumber. And Mr. Nixon gives us some for his board, and we give some of them to Mr. Jones for meat and vegetables, and the rest of them to the groceryman; and so we all make exchanges of our labor, or of what our labor has produced; and he who holds these certificates, or any of them, holds them as evidence that he has not yet got back as much as he parted with and, is entitled to. Isn't that it, Mr. Nixon—papa?"

"That's it. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!"

"Hurrah for Miss Jennie!"

"She can make a better speech than any of you," came from one and another of the little group about the table, and they laid down their knives and forks and clapped their hands in laughing applause; at which, Miss Jennie laughed also, blushing as well behind the bush which she swung to and fro above the table, and so looked prettier than ever; which every one of her boarders would have sworn but a moment before was an impossibility.

"Well, our only hope is to educate the people," said Nixon, when the merriment had subsided, recurring to the remark with which the conversation had opened.

"We must agitate and educate and organize, or another and worse panic than the one we are just beginning to recover a little from will come upon us by and by, and worse times than we have seen or known.

"The government still continues to furnish the medium of exchange to the idle instead of to the industrious, which is a crime against the people, against society and against morals; for these certificates—this money—which, put into circulation in a proper way are evidences that the holder has performed a service to society for which he has received as yet nothing in exchange, becomes—when given to the idle—a lie on its face and a means whereby the idle are made to appear the better citizens of the two; better than those who labor and produce.

"Being given the certificates by government, the idle are enabled to draw at will upon the wealth created by the industrious, and thus drawing, they keep the laborers poor and make it impossible for them to properly educate themselves or their children, or even to so dress as to appear genteel or refined; while the idlers have time for all these, and so appear even to the laborers themselves to be superior people whose example and whose mode of living it is desirable to imitate; and so their ability to distinguish between right and wrong is weakened, their ideas of what constitutes justice between man and man confused, and their moral character broken and destroyed, until at last they become incapable of maintaining even the form of self-government; and a despotism, and finally, anarchy, and the death of civilization follows. And all as the result—the natural and inevitable result—of the criminal act of those who induce the government to give to the idle instead of to the wealth-producers, who alone have any right to, or legitimate use for it—the tool of exchange—the certificate of production, money."

"That's pretty strong talk, Mr. Nixon," remarked the new-comer.

"It's true talk, though," answered one of the others.

"I can't say but it is. It does look unfair for the government, which is supposed to be run in the interests of the producers and business people, to put their medium of exchange where those who produce can get it only by paying those who neither produce nor assist in the exchange, whatever they choose to ask for it."

"Well, we'll change all that. Educate! Agitate! Organize!" said Nixon. "The time is not so very far away when the people will understand the use of money and how, through the workings of our financial system, the masses are kept poor, while the few become rich beyond anything that the wildest imagination conceived of a few years since. Then they will change the whole thing; the producer of wealth will be supplied direct by government with the means of making their exchanges one with another without paying tribute of so much as one penny to anybody. Then the wealth-producer will grow rich, the laborer will become the educated and refined and "respectable" member of society; those who live by speculation and usury, if any there be, will be looked upon as we look upon card-sharpers, or as Christians looked upon money-lenders in the times of which Shakespeare writes—when Shylock complained of Antonio that he spoiled his business by loaning money as a Christian accommodation."

"How are you going to bring this about?" asked the new-comer.

"Agitate and educate," repeated Nixon; "that's our

only hope, our only way. The people must be taught true political economy."

"That's all right, Nixon," put in one of the others. "That's all right, and I don't know of anybody who can do a better job of educating the people than you can—except Miss Jennie here. If I were you, I'd ask her to help me educate 'em. I'd ask her to take me and educate me now, if I wasn't afraid to." And the young fellow laughed with the others at his own wit.

"She would get out of conceit with so dull a scholar as you'd be, Jo," said one.

"Jo wouldn't try to learn if he had Miss Jennie for a teacher. He'd be afraid he'd graduate and have to leave school before he wanted to," said another; and then they all laughed again, and Jennie laughed with them, and swung her brush and occasionally handed some of them a dish of food or re-filled their cups with tea.

"Nixon's the only man Miss Mason would take for a steady pupil, I reckon, boys; he's the lucky scholar that's to get the prize at the end of the term, and you fellows might just as well give up trying for it, and play hookey, if you want to."

There had been a pause; not lengthy, but sufficiently marked to cause this speech to seem abrupt and purposeful, especially as it came from one who, because of his habitual disinclination to conversation, had come to be familiarly known as "The silent member;" and as he gave utterance to the words, everybody looked first at Miss Mason, and then at Nixon, as if for confirmation or denial of the implied assertion that Nixon and Miss Mason were lovers. and would some time be married.

Of course, Jennie blushed and tried to appear not to

have understood the purport of the remark. She swung her brush with vigor and tried to look at no one about the table, but when she did raise her eyes their first glance was at Nixon; and from him she received a look that was at once one of love and eager questioning.

Nixon had never ventured to permit himself to expect a return of the love he had so long entertained for the girl. He had told himself she was not for him, but for some one more polished, more learned; someone that could place her in the high social position which he knew she was so well fitted to grace; but some way the remark of the silent member coming unexpectedly and from an unexpected source broke in upon the lighter chaff, in which they had been but a moment before indulging themselves, bringing with it a strange power of conviction. The language was not more direct nor the form of expression less light and chaffy than much that had been uttered and received as the lightest pleasantry; but the words of the silent member impressed all as possible truth. And, strange to say, most of all they so impressed Nixon; and he first cast his eyes down as if to let the thought, the hope which the words inspired, sink into heart and brain; and then raised them boldly, and questioningly in search of Jennie's.

Just in time, too, did he raise them for she caught his look with her own timid glance and read in it all she had long wished she might sometime read there. Read that she had the love and devotion of the man she had long since learned to respect and admire and love above all other men whom she knew or ever expected to know.

And Nixon?

Well, Nixon saw that which encouraged him to resolve to put it to the test and win or lose it all. The next day was Sunday; and though Miss Jennie appeared unusually shy and hard to approach, even for a moment when others were not by, yet Nixon persisted and finally found opportunity of asking her to go walking with him in the cool of the day, after their late Sunday dinner.

"I want to tell you something, Jennie," he said, "and I want you to go walking with me so I can tell it. I don't know if you guess what it is, or not; but I have wanted to tell it a great while. Will you go with me and hear it?"

And Jennie had turned her blushing face away, and intimated in some manner that she would go though she hadn't the least idea what he wanted to tell.

But whatever it was that Nixon told and Jennie listened to that pleasant afternoon as they sat in a cozy nook on the bank of the creek that ran by the town, they undoubtedly came to an agreement about it that was satisfactory to both, for they looked very happy when they returned in the twilight.

"Told ye so," remarked the silent member, to one of the others, who, with himself, sat smoking their pipes on the steps, as Jennie and Nixon passed by them, with a nod to each. "Told ye so."

"Nixon's got a life scholarship, and won't never quit going to school nor take a vacation. He and Miss Jennie's been agitatin' and educatin' and now they're goin' to organize."

CHAPTER XXIV

The new seccret society is formally organized; and the silent member prophesies increase of membership. The campaign of education and organization.

Mr. Nixon and Miss Jennie Mason were, in the language of the silent member "organized into a secret society consisting of themselves," about three months after the events recorded in our last chapter transpired.

In other words, they were married.

The ceremony was performed in the front room of a little cottage in one of the shadiest though least fashionable streets of the town.

This cottage, Nixon had rented and into it had been moved what furniture Jennie and her father had; for, since Mr. Mason was of course to live with them, there was no further use for it in the little old house they were leaving.

In addition to this, they had purchased—Nixon and Jennie going together to select it—a pretty though inexpensive carpet for their front room, together with some chairs and a sofa to match; and it was here the young couple stood up to be married.

A few of Jennie's young lady friends, two or three older people with whom the family had always been intimate, and all their former boarders—including, of course, the silent member—made up the little assembly, in whose presence the ceremony took place.

To say that Jennie was very beautiful in her wedding-gown of simple white with roses at the throat and waist, and that Nixon was the happiest man in Smithville, is only to repeat what the reader has already surmised, as also that Mr. Mason was happy in the happiness of his daughter and in the belief that the man to whom he was giving her was in every way worthy of her.

The reader will also readily imagine the many pleasant things that were said by those present on the occasion, and will not be surprised to learn that the men who had boarded with the Mason's so long—some of them for fully two years—had made up a purse and purchased a pretty set of dinner dishes, which one of their number presented to the newly-made wife, with an expression of regret on behalf of the donors that they were no longer to take their meals regularly with herself and her father and husband, but declared that the crockery which they begged her to accept, was but her due, since they believed they had worn out and broken at least one full set, during the time they had been her most generously cared for boarders, and not forgetting to intimate that if herself and husband felt that this was not true, and that they had returned more dishes than they had broken, they would willingly come and take an occasional Sunday dinner with them, off of the new set, and so endeavor to make the thing entirely equal.

At which, Jennie went into a flutter of delight. The dishes were so pretty, and she had wanted a set so badly, though she knew John—she called Mr. Nixon John now—could not afford it, and they were so good to give them to her, and she and John would be ever so glad to have them often to see them, and take dinner

with them, to all of which John assented with beaming face and heart overflowing with pride in his young wife, who had so won the respect and esteem of his mates.

He shook hands all round, telling them they would always be more than welcome and must not fail to come often; after which, the silent member took him aside and solemnly, but in a voice sufficiently loud to reach those nearest, assured him of the pleasure it gave him to be present at the organization of the society; and his belief that it would surely prosper and increase in membership, and accomplish much good in the world.

And then they had cake and fruit, which Jennie had prepared, with the assistance of her lady friends, and which she insisted should be eaten off the new dinner-set in honor of its donors, after which there were other pleasant things said, and much merry passing of jokes among the young people, and then everybody shook hands with the bride and groom and with Mr. Mason, and went away; the young men walking off by the side of the young ladies, and Nixon and Jennie were left to begin their married life in their little rented cottage, without further fuss or ceremony.

They were too poor to make it seem wise to go on a wedding tour. Nixon was now doing a fair stroke of business at his shop, employing one and sometimes two assistants. But times were still close, and coming as he did in competition with corporations having a capital which enabled them to manufacture with the greatest advantage, compelled him to sell at a price which but just about left him the wages paid to skilled workmen in the factories.

It had the advantage, however, of leaving him his

own boss and free to speak and act as his own conscience and judgment dictated; hence, at liberty to contribute of his time and occasionally of his earnings to the work of education and organization of the people, which he held to be so essential to the future welfare of the wealth-producer, and indeed of the whole human race.

He was now corresponding with other agitators and educators in nearly every portion of the country, and was constantly writing for the reform papers of which a hundred or more had sprung up in the different sections of the country during the last few years.

These papers were nearly all little country sheets; either that or equally small and poorly supported city publications, maintained in the former case, by private donations from individual reformers or out of the previous accumulations of their editors and publishers.

The city publications of this class were usually set up by some one or more printers at off hours, or when not at work at the case for some more prosperous concern, which, by championing the cause of the corporations and the rich, was in receipt of an income both from subscription and advertising that enabled it to float easily upon the tide and put money into the pockets of its proprietors.

Almost every week one or more of these little reform papers failed to issue, and its friends and subscribers knew that its patronage had been insufficient to meet expenses, and that it had suspended publication. But as fast as one succumbed, another somewhere took its place; and the work of education and organization proceeded steadily though not without great sacrifice on the part of those who were engaged in pushing it.

Every effort was made by the politicians of both

old political parties and by the corporations and money-kings back of them to make the work of the reformers non-effective. So thorough was the organization of these old parties and so effectually had they poisoned the minds of the people and so persistently did they work upon their prejudice that even in country neighborhoods it was difficult to circulate a knowledge of an appointment to speak by one of the reform orators; their bills being torn down ere they had been posted a single day, and reports that the speaking had been postponed or abandoned, falsely started, when information of the appointment had been in someway given.

Every school district in every northern state had its local bosses, who worked under orders from the bosses of their respective parties higher up, and who made it the duty of the little bosses to watch for any signs of wavering in the voters and to endeavor, by any means known to politics, to prevent them from deserting to the reform party which now had its organization in every state and territory in the union, and was ready with its candidates and its platform of principles at every election. Not only this, but votes cast for reform candidates were not counted as cast.

A favorite trick of the bosses was to discourage the reform voters by predicting that the vote for their candidate would be but very light, telling them it was a trick of the politicians of the opposite party to induce them to vote the reform ticket, and thus weaken the party they acted with, and that those pretending to leave the opposition party were not sincere, and would not vote as they talked, and then to appear to prove the truth of this prediction, by providing that the reform vote should be reported only in part, thus

making the vote of the dissatisfied element appear too small to incite respect or investigation and those who voted the reform ticket to be distrustful of others who voted it, each thinking the other treacherous and seeking only to deceive them in the interest of one or the other of the old parties.

The policy and power of the banks were also made manifest by the refusal to grant accommodations to business men of any class or description, who patronized either, by subscribing for, or inserting advertisments in reform papers; and encouraging such journals and especially such agricultural and religious journals as would publish articles furnished or suggested by the banking interest, supporting their views and denouncing the reformers as cranks and criminals, whose theories upon matters pertaining to governmental affairs, were unworthy of consideration or answer by men of sense and understanding. And finally, whenever a labor reformer could be found with sufficient influence to cause his betrayal of his fellow reformers to have a discouraging effect upon them, he was approached with offers of bribes, either of money or position, and if found weak enough to accept, was paid his price and kept in the organization as a disorganizing force until his efforts in that direction had become so apparent that he could no longer retain his membership, and was either expelled or permitted to withdraw.

All this was very discouraging to Nixon and men like him, who were giving of their time and substance in an effort to save the people from the results of their own blindness. But they continued still to work on and to find encouragment in the fact that slowly but surely, their ideas were spreading; and that the leaven

which they were sending out was gradually, at times, almost imperceptibly, but certainly, leavening the whole loaf.

In the work of education too, Mr. Mason found employment and consequent contentment.

He could sit at a table and write, if he could not get about to make speeches to the people.

And this he did continually; finally putting his ideas upon political economy into a small book, which, being published by Nixon's assistance, and advertised in the reform papers, sold to an extent that not only enabled him to repay Nixon what he had advanced for its publication, but afterward brought its author a small income; very small indeed—no more than a few dollars each month, but still enough to make him feel less dependent, and also that his labors for the cause of the people were beginning to be appreciated, and that the time would come when they would be more so; when indeed a full knowledge not only of the truths which he and others like him were teaching, should reach the understanding and hearts of the people, but when they should also perceive how bitterly they had been deceived and wronged by their party-leaders, who had made merchandise of their prosperity and their liberties; selling them to the corporations and the money powers, keeping them divided upon sectional lines and partisan issues in order to prevent them from thinking independently or acting intelligently in their own interests as the laborers and wealth producers of the nation.

North and South the people were still divided upon sectional lines, and south of the Mason and Dixon line but little work had been possible by the reformers, as the outrages committed upon the people of those states

by the carpet-bag government after the close of hostilities had been such as to embitter against the North even the citizens who had never been in hearty sympathy with the secession movement, and to make it difficult, almost impossible, for the reformers of the North to engage their attention or induce them to put the least confidence in any protestations of intentions to secure justice alike to all sections and all classes.

The first, and for a time, the only reform speaker sent South, was run out of the state, which he had invaded, under threat of personal violence being done him if he remained, or attempted to again present his views in public.

In this, as in all other obstacles in the way of spreading their propaganda, the hand of the politician was clearly visible to those who understood their "ways that are dark," and had suffered from their "tricks that are vain."

These men, these politicians, these tools of the money power of the world, whose head is in Europe, and whose tentacles are spread over the whole earth, are coiled about every people and every individual producer of wealth everywhere; these politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, sought by every means to keep alive the feelings of bitterness involved by the cruel war, and to term this hatred of brother for brother to their own personal advantage and to the advantage of those whom they served. Hence, when the reformers of the North would have sent their speakers to the southern states, bearers of the olive branch of peace and the banners of friendship and brotherly love, these men, these creatures, these tools of the money powers, saw in it the threat of coming disaster to them. For if the people of the two sections

should come together and discuss in earnestness of purpose, and dispassionate language, their mutual interests, and their separate grievances, they would surely discover how they had been deceived by their leaders and would promptly dismiss them as they justly deserved to the obscurity that they dreaded and to the contempt of all patriots.

Therefore, every effort of the reformers to introduce their ideas to the people of the South, was met by tales of the politician of its being an effort on the part of the Radical party to divide the white people of the South and revive the horrors of the carpet-bag government, and the people were incited to refuse to read the reform papers or even to tolerate in their midst or to permit to make public addresses, the reform speakers who honestly and truthfully sought to obtain equal justice for the people of all portions of the country.

But, in spite of the hindering efforts of the politicians, in spite of sectional prejudice and partisan bitterness, the work of education went forward.

Here and there in the South as in the North, some man among the people, of unusual breadth of intellect, some patriot and humanitarian, some one who saw through the pretense of these crafty demagogues, and read their true purposes beneath the cloak they wore, here and there some man caught the inspiration of the movement of reform and raised aloft the banner of the new dispensation.

Every possible effort was made by the reformers North, to encourage the people South to believe in their integrity of purpose to do equal justice to all, and in the national convention, although the representation from the South was small and comparatively weak, they selected a southern man and an ex-con-

federate for vice-President—putting him upon the national ticket, by the side of an equally gallant soldier who had led the boys in blue; and with these as their standard bearers went before the country upon a platform of principles which asserted the right of all men and women to the products of their own labor; insisted that the right to coin and issue money was a sovereign power residing in the general government alone, and that it was the duty of the general government to supply its citizens with the money necessary to enable them to make an exchange of wealth upon a cash basis; denounced the national banking system as destructive of the liberty and prosperity of the people, and, generally demanded that the corporation be put under proper control and be no longer permitted to prey off of the wealth-producing and business interests of the country.

The result of the contest which followed is a part of the history of the country, and needs not to be dwelt upon here.

The means used by the leaders of the two old political parties and the power which was back of them, to crush the new party, are not so well known and will never be fully understood or appreciated by the people until they shall look back upon that page of our nation's history in the day and hour when success shall have crowned their struggle for industrial freedom, and the fruits of that victory shall lay at their feet and cluster about their hearthstones.

When that time comes, as it surely will come, the masses of people, both those who supported and those who opposed the platform and candidates for the reform party in 1880, will look with feelings of shame upon the methods by which the politician sought to

accomplish the destruction of that party and to hold within the line of the respective old parties, the voters of the country.

Misrepresentation, ridicule, bribery, threats, bulldozing, ballot-box stuffing, miscounting or failure to count at all, the vote cast for the reform party, false report of the vote finally counted, making it appear less than it was, and too insignificant to attract attention, these were a part of the means resorted to during and after the campaign to deceive, defraud and mislead the people and cause them to be and remain, the tools, even willing tools, in the hands of partisan leaders for their own undoing.

Sectional hatreds were revived; old tales of wrongs done by one section of the country to another were recalled and repeated, new ones invented and retailed from the stumps and through the Satanic press of the country.

The "bloody shirt" was re-stained for the occasion and swung aloft before the eyes of the North, while in the South, the "nigger" was prodded until he showed indications of resentment or if not, was accused of it, and dragged into the newspapers if not into the arena to help excite still further the fears and prejudices and hatreds of the people of the two sections, and the voters of the two old parties. Yet, out of it all, the Reform party came with colors flying; with the honor of the candidates upon the national and state tickets untarnished, and with an accredited vote of between three and four hundred thousand.

It came with more than this. It came with undiminished courage in the hearts of its leaders and its rank and file alike. It came with confidence unim-

paired, and with its faith in the justice of its cause, and the final success of its principles increased.

Throughout the entire campaign and in every state and district where it had an organization, it had held aloft its banner and had gathered at least a few devoted and intelligent followers.

And nowhere had its opponents dared to meet its defenders in fair and open fight. Not once did the orators of either old party meet, in joint debate, those of the reform party although challenges to do so were kept standing in all reform papers, were printed upon every poster and bill announcing reform rallies, and sent in private and courteous communications by hand and through the mail to every opposition orator. Not once did their opponents meet them; not once did they attempt by fair argument and reference to fact and history, to refute their position or disprove their statements. But by numerous innuendos, ridicule, false statements of facts, misrepresentation of the candidates and the platform, these statesmen (?) these leaders of great political parties, parties of moral ideas, of respectability, and the "funds of the people" conducted their campaign against the party of Reform and—lost.

I say lost, for although they prevented it from reaching the great masses of the voters and kept the large majority of the people from understanding, or even greatly desiring to understand, its object and purposes, it yet failed to utterly annihilate it as they hoped to have done, but left it stonger in numbers and infinitely stronger in the faith of thousands of its members in the justice and wisdom of its purposes.

It had reached in its leavening influence thousands who were yet in bondage to the old parties; it had

found and inserted an entering wedge into the solid South, it had proven and maintained the integrity of purpose of its leaders, the intelligence and incorruptibility of its rank and file, and had exposed to the country and to the world the corruption within the old parties hitherto hidden by a thin veil of pretense of patriotism, love for the people, the constitution and the flag of our fathers.

"We will win yet," said Nixon, laying down the paper in which he had been reading the latest returns of the reform party vote, and going over to where his wife sat and kissing her. "We'll win yet, sure. The old party papers have carefully refrained from reporting our vote wishing to make the impression that we cast none or next to none, but gradually it is coming out that we did cast a large one, considering all that we had to contend with."

"Educate and agitate," answered Jennie smilingly, returning his caress and looking up fondly and proudly into his face.

Nixon laughed. He knew that his young wife believed him to be one of the noblest and truest of men, as he certainly was one of the kindest, most loving and appreciative of husbands; and this sly little pricking at his enthusiasm, the smiling repetition of the words which were forever on his lips, whenever the reform cause was the theme of conversation, did not vex him in the least.

"Yes, little wife," he said, "agitate, educate and organize. It's our only hope," and he bent over and kissed her again.

CHAPTER XXV

The tramp nuisance: Found dead under a hay-stack.

The tramp nuisance. A new method of dealing with tramps that will likely have the effect of inducing them to avoid our city and community in the future.

"The Sheriff of our county has adopted a new and somewhat unique method of dealing with the tramps that have of late infested our city and the country lying round about. Too lazy to work these miserable wretches have, during the recent severe weather, drifted into the city in large numbers and through their presence and their persistance in begging have become so great a nuisance that many of our best citizens, so our worthy sheriff informs us, have complained to him and urged upon him the necessity of adopting some means of abating it, and them.

"Fines and locking up in the calaboose or city jail does no good—is in fact, just what they desire as they are thus secured from both cold and hunger, since it is not yet considered quite the proper thing to shut them up and starve them to death, though that might, after all, be the easiest and most humane way of settling the queston of what to do with these outcasts, to whom society really owes nothing.

"However, our very efficient sheriff, thinks he has found the proper way of dealing with them and we

have no doubt that if not interfered with, he will speedily rid the community of their presence.

"On Saturday morning he, with the assistance of several deputies, gathered up such of the tramp fraternity as he could readily lay hands on, took them to the outskirts of the city, and after lashing each and every one of them in turn, with a good black-snake whip, laying it on thoroughly and well, until, in fact, the miserable wretches begged and plead to be let off and promised never again to be seen in the city or vicinity, they were allowed to go; but with the assurance that if they ever returned, the dose would be doubled at the very least.

"This may not be a strictly legal way of abating the tramp nuisance, but we repeat that it is likely to prove an effectual one and we do not doubt that our best citizens will sustain the sheriff and his deputies in any measures which they may find necessary to accomplish this much-to-be desired result."

The foregoing editorial appeared in one of the leading daily papers of the Capital city of one of our central western states; and was as well a statement of that which actually occurred as an expression of the sentiment of the editor of the paper, and, it is fair to suppose, of a considerable number of other citizens of that community.

The tramps were taken as was stated, to the city limits and "well and thoroughly lashed."

They had been guilty as charged of having flocked to the city and for the most part with but one purpose and one hope—that of being arrested and confined in some penal institution where they would be protected from the terrible inclemency of the weather and supplied with sufficient food to stay the cravings of

hunger until the severe cold should abate. Most of them had already served at least one sentence of ten days in the calaboose; but as when they were released, the cold was still intense, making it quite impossible to sleep out of doors or in barns and straw-stacks, they still lingered about, begging or purloining from the citizens of the place such articles of food or clothing as opportunity offered, or charity would give, hoping thereby to sustain life until warmer weather made its appearance once more, or until again arrested and sentenced to another term in the county jail.

But against this, numbers of the "best citizens" had protested, going to the sheriff with their complaints.

If it had been summer time, if the ground had not been frozen so as to make it quite impossible to carry on repairs upon the streets, these wretched caricatures of prosperous humanity might have been made to earn their board and lodging by being put to work; but as it was, anything done to prolong their existence but added to that which must be raised by a levy upon the property of the citizens of the county and city; and against this the "best citizens" protested.

Some of these same best citizens had once before protested against retaining in their church conference, or giving a charge to one of their most eminent clergymen, who had felt it to be his duty to denounce from the pulpit, as also from the rostrum, the economic systems in force in the country; systems which he had declared were the cause of the evil times, and that had filled the land with poverty and suffering—and tramps.

That they had not succeeded in doing so, but instead, had called the attention of thousands of people to his utterances and so drawn about him a faithful and

admiring band of followers who bestowed upon him honors in return for the insults which the church and the "best citizens" heaped upon him was not their fault nor their virtue.

Perhaps it was the memory of what this clergyman had told them, of why tramps were abroad in the land, and of their ineffectual efforts at punishing him for thus daring to reflect upon the wisdom and patriotism of these "best citizens," who were supporters and defenders of these systems—perhaps it was the memory of these things which made them now so anxious to get the tramps away out of their sight since their presence must be a constant reminder of the truths told them by this clergyman and of their own ineffectual attempts to avenge themselves upon him.

In this herd of wretched beings, among these tramps gathered up by the sheriff and his deputies on that bitter cold morning, there were two in whom our reader will feel an especial interest.

The one was a slightly-built, light complexioned man, in middle life probably, though it would have been difficult to tell much about his age by his looks, for he was bent, and wasted with exposure and disease, and he seldom raised his eyes from the ground in front of him. When he did, however, one could not help noticing how softly blue they were, nor how they seemed to plead for mercy for the poor body and the crushed spirit within.

A pair of trowsers that showed the most careful and painstaking efforts to make them—not respectable in appearane, for they were long past that—but a covering which should not expose any portion of his person, these and an old coat too large for him and which, though ragged in places, yet showed that it had been

repeatedly patched in others, and under this a coarse shirt, composed the entire outfit of clothing of this tramp, excepting only that upon his feet. On these was a pair of patched and broken shoes, through the holes in which might be seen a covering of rags.

As he walked, or stood, while other outcasts were being looked up and brought in, a hollow cough every now and then issued from his lungs and racked his whole body, and at times he staggered as he walked; while at every opportunity he sought the support of a railing or leaned against the side of the building by which he stood.

If the reader does not recognize in this picture of one of societies outcasts him whom we have known as Doctor, it is because of the change in his appearance which has taken place since last he was among us.

For this is surely Doctor.

Of his wanderings since we last saw him, and after his release from the hospital where he was sent even before his sentence to the stone pile in a Pennsylvania town, we have space for but few of the details.

Suffice it to say that he remained as a patient in the hospital, where he had been sent when it became evident that he could not possibly continue to labor any longer at the rock pile, until in a measure restored to health, and had then been found to be so handy at caring for the sick, so faithful in following the directions of the physicians and others in charge of the institution that he was allowed to act as a kind of nurse, and in this capacity he remained for some months longer, though without being put upon the pay roll or given any compensation whatever beyond his board and lodging.

But for two things he might have remained here indefinitely; might eventually have been put upon wages

as a regular employé of the hospital, than which nothing could have pleased him better, as he delighted in doing for others, and what little confidence in himself he possessed, and what little pride of ability was possible to him, found expression in doing, and showing a talent for doing well, for the sick and afflicted.

His misfortune and the cause of his dismissal was his inability to appear to approve what was cruel even to brutishness in his superiors, and a firm adherence to the cause of the laborers that ended in a refusal to vote in a city election as directed to do by the local bosses of the party in power, and who, as a consequence of being in power in the city, had filled the hospitals and other charitable institutions with officers and employés of their own party, pledged to do the work which might be required of them by their party leaders.

An election for city officers was being held, and the bosses had informed those in charge of the charitable institutions that they needed the votes of every employé, and so far as they were able to go to the polls, of every patient in the charity hospital; and this information was imparted, among others, to Doctor, not doubting that he would cheerfully comply; as what interest, beyond keeping a place where he was well fed and comfortable, could a tramp possibly have in an election.

Doctor however refused compliance.

"I'd like to do as you ask," he said to the Steward through whom the command to vote a certain ticket came. "I'd like mightily to accommodate you for you have been kind to me and kind to the others but you see I can't. I belong to the Labor Party and as they have a ticket in the field, I must vote with them. It would not be honorable or right not to, would it?"

The "would it" was uttered as a question which pre-

sumed the possibility of but one answer and that answer an assurance that the questioner was right and in honor bound to vote his convictions.

But Doctor's evident expectation that this would meet the approval of the other and be accepted as sufficient reason why he could not vote as that other suggested, only provoked a stare of incredulity and surprise, followed by a warning that "such excuses didn't go down with the bosses."

"Don't make any bigger fool of yourself than nature intended you for," was the advice with which the Steward closed his admonitions. "You have got a comfortable berth here now and if you do what is asked of you, will stand a chance of being but upon the rolls as a regular employé with regular pay. If you don't you will be bounced without ceremony, the moment those in charge of the institution hear of your refusal, and your place given to some one who will vote right."

And Doctor had thereafter gone about among the patients with a heavy load upon his heart, doing for each whatever offices they stood in need of and which it was possible for him to perform. Bruised and crushed limbs he dressed as tenderly as the gentlest woman could do; fever-heated pillows he changed and turned and replaced under weary heads as softly as a mother's hand had done; tired bodies were refreshed by his careful turnings, and skillful, because loving-adjustment of coverings.

But on the day of election he was questioned as to his intention of voting the Labor ticket, and replying with humble mein but brave spirit that such was his duty to his fellows and such his intention, he was rudely and profanely told to "get" and not permit himself to be

seen about the building again if he wanted to keep whole bones inside his body.

So Doctor was again a tramp.

That day his vote was challenged, as it would not have been had he marched to the polls with others under the lead of one of the bosses of the party in power.

But if Doctor was timid and fearful of his fellows, he was also brave in the discharge of duty as he saw it, and he swore in his vote as he had a right to do, since he had been in the state long enough to acquire a legal residence and had no home elsewhere.

Then after voting he wandered about town looking for work but not finding it.

Once he was about to engage to do some servile labor for a citizen who appeared to have need of his services, but after asking and receiving apparently satisfactory replies to numerous questions as to his ability to perform the labor that would be required of him, the gentleman suddenly recalled the fact that he had seen Doctor at the rock pile, and so refused to employ him.

That night he slept in a pile of lumber on one of the back streets, and during the days that followed again sought employment, occasionally obtaining a job of some kind, and slowly and painfully laying up a small sum until he had secured enough to purchase the material for a few bottles of his "preparation" with which he started out in the direction of home, as he always thought of Smithville.

But the people had little money with which to purchase "preparations;" and Doctor, though usually kindly treated in the homes of the poor, and he visited no others, was soon compelled to beg or starve, and so again came under the penalty of the law and was again arrested, and put at work upon the streets; was again dis-

charged, again arrested and discharged; and finally, having, after many months, arrived within what appeared to him almost hailing distance of home, was once more in the clutches of an officer of the law and of one who proposed to adopt measures that would effectually prevent the best citizens from further annoyance by tramps.

Through the streets of a Christian city, past churches whose steeples pointed high towards heaven, past the costly residences of men who had sworn in the bankrupt courts that they had surrendered to their creditors all of their possessions, the sheriff and his deputies went with their "catch" of tramps, and upon the outskirts of the city applied the lash until the poor wretches begged for "mercy," "mercy," and promised not again to pollute the alleys and byways of the city with their presence.

When Doctor's turn to bare his person to the blacksnake whip came, he made no resistance; made no outcry as the cruel lash decended again and again upon his poor back and curled with biting sting about his emaciated body. Not once did he lift his eyes from the ground; not once ask for mercy; not once make a sign of any kind save as the involuntary twitching of the muscles of the exposed portions of his body showed the agony he was enduring. But when the lashing ceased and he was told to "get," he staggered weakly away down the road in the direction taken by the others who had first received their punishment without so much as an effort to draw his tattered coat about his bruised and bleeding form.

But we said there were two among these unfortunates whom the reader would feel an interest in, Doctor is one, who can the other be. He is a man who once owned and managed a large manufacturing industry, and worked and voted hundreds of laborers.

But a panic and evil times came upon the country. For a time this man struggled against the decline in prices and lessened sales due to the contraction of the currency and consequent inability of the people to buy, and then, seeing the almost inevitable loss of his entire fortune staring him in the face, if he continued business, he did as many others had done before and did do afterwards; hid away all the ready money he could lay his hands on, in what he thought to be a safe place, and surrendered the remainder to his creditors through the court of bankruptcy; intending, when everything should be settled and times began to revive, to begin over again; feeling sure with what he had saved, of being able soon to regain all and more than he had lost.

But like many another who thought he could measure in advance the full effect of the panic, he erred. The money which he had hidden away from his employés and other creditors so carefully was deposited under an assumed name in a bank in a distant state.

Of the solidity of this bank he had not a doubt. No bank in the country was considered safer or in less danger of failing.

Perhaps it need not have failed.

Perhaps its officers thought it more profitable to fail than to continue business and take the risk of losses through their necessary connection with other banks, and with those business firms that had, in the past, been their heaviest depositors, but now were most persistent in their demands for loans to help tide them over their financial stress.

Be that as it may the bank in which this once prosperous and always shrewd business man, now a tramp, had deposited his hidden treasures, failed; and when its affairs were settled and those who had been appointed

to settle them had paid themselves and the other necessary expenses of the settlement there was nothing whatever left for the depositors; and the once wealthy manufacturer was almost penniless.

Then followed a long fit of sickness; and when after months of confinement to his room and his bed, he arose with shattered strength and courage to go out into the world in search of an opening for his talents (capital he no longer had), he found that even such talents as his were once acknowledged to be, were in little demand, and that demand more than met already by others who like himself had gone down in the financial maelstrom and were obliged to begin life again at the foot of the ladder.

Younger men, many of these were too, and hence more to be desired as employés by those who had weathered the storm, or, having been successful in hiding away some portion of their fortunes were again struggling for their old place among the great business enterprises of the country, and who desired, not so much some one to plan, they could do that for themselves, as men of energy and vigor to rustle for trade; men possessed of the physical strength and endurance necessary to make rustling a success.

For weeks this man sought for employment such as he was physically and mentally capable of doing, and failed.

Everywhere younger and more energetic appearing men were ahead of him, or were given preference over him.

Then followed another spell of sickness, "a relapse," the physician said, and this time he was sent to the hospital; the city hospital; the hospital maintained by the authorities of the city aided by donations from the char-

itable; and when, months later, he left his cot and with trembling limbs and weakened mental faculties stood once more in the streets of the city where his hidden savings had been sucked in by the broken bank, no one would for a moment think of giving him a place of any kind where either skill or address were necessary to success. And broken and desperate, cursing his fate and those who had brought it upon him, he turned away and walked out of the city and struck the country road —a tramp.

And now it is his time—the last man, in the crowd of wretches which the sheriff is torturing, to receive the lash.

With a swirl and a swish the whip cuts the keen wintry air and descends upon the bared back of the tramp.

He answers with an oath, and with writhings seeks to free himself from the ropes that bind him.

Again the swish and swirl, the cruel blow, and the answering curse.

Again and again, and yet a score of times the whip rises and falls and the wretched being whose back is being lacerated grinds his teeth, and with horrid oaths and foaming lips struggles to burst his bonds.

But they are too strong for his old limbs to break; and at last he sinks down in a faint.

Then he is released; and when revived is told to "go" as the others have done; and like them he staggers down the country road and the officers and his deputies return to the city to re-assure the "best citizens" with a report of their confidence in the entire success of the new method of dealing with the tramp nuisance.

Two weeks later a country paper published a score or

so of miles away from the city had the following in its weekly issue:

"*Found dead under a haystack.*"

"As John Jones, a resident of Morris Tp., was crossing the field of his neighbor, Robert Bly, on Thursday of this week, his attention was attracted by what at first appeared an old garment of some kind fluttering in the wind by the side of a rick of hay which had not yet been removed to the barn.

"On closer inspection, however, he was horrified to find the dead bodies of two men, evidently tramps, who had doubtless sought temporary shelter from the cold by crawling under the hay, of which they had managed to pull a quantity from the stack, and, after piling it up against one side of the stack itself, had crawled under it.

"Evidently the cold increased after they had thus taken refuge against it and they probably became numbed without being aware of it and so continued until they froze to death.

"Nothing was found upon either of the men to indicate who they were or what brought them to the condition they were in, though, curiously enough there was found pinned to the inside of the coat of the smaller and younger of the two a letter with the following address:

HON. HORACE SWANSON,

H. R. Washington, D. C."

"Whether it is possible that a dead tramp had written the letter himself with intention of mailing it when opportunity offered, or whether he had found or stolen it is a matter for conjecture only, as the coroner's jury which was called to set upon the bodies decided that they had no right to open and examine the contents, but instead placed it in the mails to be forwarded as addressed.

"The letter had evidently been carried in the position in which it was found for a considerable time; as it was much crumpled and soiled.

"Both men were meanly clad and both bore evidence upon their persons of having recently been treated to a flagellation of some kind.

"It has been suggested that they had recently been caught in some act of petty burglary or something of the sort by some one who thought it well to save the community the expense of a legal trial and legal punishment, and so had, with the assistance probably of some of his neighbors, proceeded to mete out justice with his own hand.

"It may have been the knowledge that they were still liable to arrest for their crime which prevented the tramps from applying for shelter at some farm house.

"One of these unfortunate men who has thus lost his life, was apparently not much if any past the prime of manhood, but had the appearance of being of weakly body if not positively ill before his death. The other was much older but had evidently once been a man of good physique and considerable muscular strength. The bodies indicated that they had been dead some days if not weeks. In fact it is probable that they froze to death during the cold snap of the 18th which is now two weeks past.

"They were buried at the expense of the county."

The two tramps were Doctor and O. L. D. Hardiman, both known to the readers of these pages from their relations to the other characters in this simple narrative.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Making up the issues. A big day in the House of Representatives. One grave with a headstone. And one without.

It had been a big day in the House of Representatives at Washington.

Again a congressional election was approaching, and although it was yet months in the future, the leaders of the two great political parties were already skirmishing for position; had in fact done little else than skirmish with one another since the session began.

What legislation had been enacted had been of small importance to the public generally, except in the case of one or two bills passed at the instance of the corporations; notably that of the land-grant railroads which had been made more secure in their claims to certain lands which they maintained had been donated to them by Congress, but which were in the possession of settlers under the homestead and preemption laws, or which it was asserted, were not within the grant of lands to the railroads; or even if so, had been forfeited by their failure to comply with the provisions of the law that made the grant.

To this legislation in favor of the corporations there had been little real opposition, though at first some had been threatened. Such of the objectors, however, as were known to have influence in the body had been seen and reasoned with by the agents of the interested corpora-

tions, and thereafter things had moved along smoothly and to their satisfaction.

The laboringman's party or "Greenbackers" as they were called had elected two or three members of the House, but they were entirely ignored by the other members, so far as their demands for legislation in the interests of the people were concerned. The speaker of the House refused even to recognize one of their number who sought for months to obtain the floor in order to introduce a bill containing the substance of the demands of those whom he represented, rising and addressing the speaker for that purpose at every occasion when to do so would be in order, but never being recognized or permitted to voice the wishes of his constituents upon the floor of the House.

This action of the speaker was regarded as a good joke by the politicians of both old parties. They enjoyed hugely the contempt exhibited by the speaker for the representative of those who wanted to change existing systems. The Satanic *Press* joked about it, and the illustrated papers had full page and highly colored caricatures of the scene in the House, where a big man—the speaker—sat down upon a "little boy that wanted to be heard;" and all the big boys stood around and applauded.

But on this particular day, the leaders of the two old parties in the House had met and locked horns in a struggle for position before the country.

Having united in giving to the corporations what they asked, and in preventing the representatives of the laboringmen and farmers from being heard, they were now ready to contend between themselves for the spoils of office; and, for this purpose, were uniting in raising false issues upon which the people could be

kept divided and themselves retained in power—agents of the corporations and beneficiaries of the spoils system.

Accordingly, the party of "Great Moral Ideas" had made an attack upon the party "that is always the friend of the people," and had denounced its followers, rank and file, as "unreconstructed rebels" who refused to accept in good faith the reconstruction laws for the benefit and protection of the citizens of the southern states, accusing them of "pursuing the shotgun policy with relation to the negro" who was, they declared, prevented from the right of suffrage extended to him by the law of the land; being compelled either to vote in opposition to the party which had given him his liberty, the party which he loved, or frightened away from the polls altogether, thus making a solid South; a South solid in opposition to equality of opportunity, and leaving the North to still stand as the sole defender of the majesty of the law, and the equal rights of all the people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In a word, "the bloody shirt" had been waved with vigor; and the politicians upon that side of the House had waxed eloquent in describing the wrongs of the black man and the dislike of the Southern white man to any proposition for doing him justice. To all of which, the democratic leaders, without regard to the locality of birth or present residence, had replied with equal eloquence and spirit, charging their opponents with attempting to force the white people of the South to accept the negro as a social equal; and offsetting the charge of using shotguns to keep negroes from the polls by countercharges of attempts on the part of the republicans, to intimidate both whites and blacks

by surrounding the polls with corydons of federal bayonets.

And this wordy fight waxed hot, and bitter things were said, and bitterly replied to.

The ablest debaters upon either side were engaged. The sharpest wits in either party thrust in their keen blades at every opportunity. Members rose excitedly from their seats and cast angry glances in the direction of their opponents, and hurled epithets, and seemed ready to hurl bound volumes of congressional reports at each other.

The speaker rapped in vain for order. The American Eagle screamed, and the sergeant-at-arms marched solemnly down the aisle, bearing aloft the ensign of his office.

Then order began slowly to resume its sway over the body.

The speaker continued to pound with his gavel and to call out:

"Will the gentlemen take their seats?"

"The gentlemen must take their seats."

"The gentlemen will take their seats immediately, or the sergeant-at-arms will be compelled to remove the gentlemen from the floor."

The sergeant-at-arms continued to pass up and down the different aisles, and, as he passed, the members, slowly and with mutterings, subsided into their respective seats, and all became orderly once more.

And then a member rose, and moved that the body adjourn for the day; another member seconded it. It was put by the speaker, who declared the motion carried unanimously, and at once the members began to file out of the hall.

The skirmish was over for the present.

In the rotunda, and in the hat and cloak room, those who had been but a few moments before accusing each other, or the parties which each represented, of the most odious crimes against the different sections of the country, now mingled and chatted together pleasantly of other matters; made appointments to attend some place of amusement in each other's company; or locked arms and together went out and took a drink.

But each read the papers carefully for days afterward to see what effect the affair had produced upon the country, and how much notoriety each had personally gotten out of it.

They smiled cheerfully whenever they found mention made of themselves, and hopefully when they read on the one hand, that "the South would remain solid so long as the North persisted in attempting to force negro equality upon its indignant people;" and upon the other, that "the North would never consent to yield the fruits of its victory, won in a contest wherein the blood of its best and bravest had flowed in torrents that wet the southern soil to a lot of unreconstructed rebels."

Horace Swanson had taken such part in this battle of words upon the floor of the House as had brought him credit in the eyes of the older members and recognized leaders of the party.

With good command of language, naturally impulsive, quick of wit, and ready in repartee, he had been drawn into the debate almost without knowing how or why. But once in and aroused, he had done and said his full share of bitter and scathing things, and so had won reputation as a debater and a partisan.

And he was not displeased at the knowledge that

he had done so. On the contrary, he felt like congatulating himself upon the fact, and rather hoped that other occasions might arise in which he should find opportunity to show his metal, and he determined to be prepared for them when they came; and at once began taxing his wits for sharp sayings and sarcastic expressions to be laid up in the safe but easily opened receptacle of his memory, to be kept for use when wanted.

Busy with his thoughts, he forgot, for a time, to examine the letters that he had thrust into his pocket before leaving the Capitol building.

Remembering them at last, he threw them on the table in his room, where he usually answered his mail, and then, still standing, proceeded to pick them up again one at a time, and glance at the post-mark upon each.

There were letters from various post-offices, mostly within his own congressional district; though there were a few from other districts and states. He knew well, before opening, the purport of the larger portion of them. Experience had taught him that a majority of all letters received by members of Congress contain requests for personal favors of some kind, his own being largely in relation to pensions; but many of them requests for assistance in procuring an office, or a position in some of the departments of government at Washington. Others again were upon various matters of importance to the writers but of no importance whatever to the public or to the members of Congress, to whom they were addressed.

Among those which Congressman Swanson was now running over in search of something to indicate which was of most interest and hence to be first read, none

appeared to promise anything important, or even curious, until he came to one that, from its crumpled and soiled envelope, indicated having been long in transit, or having met with an accident of some kind.

Nothing in the handwriting or the post-mark suggested an idea of its probable contents, or of its author, and yet it awoke a not altogether pleasant feeling in his breast, and he at once seated himself at the table and proceeded to open it.

Glancing at the contents, he noticed that it was not dated at any place, and curious, turned at once to the bottom of the last page and read the simple signature of "Doctor."

A smile lit up his face for an instant as he mentally recalled the picture of his humble friend, and thought of his walking all the way .to Washington to offer advice and assistance to himself, previous to the last election.

"I am glad Doctor has let himself be heard from at last: couldn't imagine what had become of him; was afraid he had got into trouble someway," he was mentally saying as he turned the sheets and began to read the contents.

"Dear Mr. Swanson:—I know you will have wondered why you have neither seen nor heard from me since the time I was in Washington, nearly two years ago, and that you will have been uneasy about me, for you were always kind to everybody, and you were my friend.

"Indeed, Mr. Swanson, I would have written you, would have asked you for assistance, but that at times I could not, and then sometimes I have felt ashamed to let you know where and how I was. I knew I ought not to have felt ashamed to let you know, for you would have understood, and would not have blamed me.

"You know, Mr. Swanson, that I never wanted anybody to give me anything; that I tried hard to make a living by work and by selling my preparation, which really was good for what I recommended it, and ever so much cheaper than having a doctor, or even buying medicine that was patented, and I think I did right in selling it as I tried to do.

"But, Mr. Swanson, I have been arrested as a tramp a great many times, and have been compelled to work at things which I was not strong enough to do; and often I could not get food or any place to sleep, except out in the cold and wet; for, in some of the states, they have laws to arrest a man if he so much as asks for food or lodging. And now I am sick and am going to die, and shall never see you or Mr. Nixon or any of my friends again; and so I write to let you know what has become of me, so you will not be troubled about me any more, but will know that I am dead when you read this, for I shall not send it; but just keep it about me till I die, and then somebody will send it to you.

"I want you to know also, Mr. Swanson, that the tramps are not all bad men, or that they would not be if they had a chance to be good. I have talked with a great many of them, and some of them have been very kind to me, and are often kind to each other, and share what they have with each other, even when they are hungry themselves.

"But, Mr. Swanson, almost all of them were honest men once. A great many were mechanics and had homes and families when the panic came, and all the factories stopped.

"When the shops shut down, these men started out to find work somewhere else, but they couldn't find it, and they got out of money, and then they were tramps, and were arrested, and put in prison, or at work on the streets; and when they came out, no one would have them or give them work, and they had to tramp. They couldn't help being tramps, Mr. Swanson, and it isn't fair nor right to arrest them and so make them out to

be criminals, and disgrace them and break up their families.

"I know you didn't know about this as well as I do, because you haven't been a tramp, and couldn't know, and so I wanted to tell you how it is that there are tramps, so you could do something—get some law passed, maybe, that will help them or stop making them.

"I could not get back to Smithville in time to vote for you last election, for I was sick, but I read in the papers that you were re-elected and so I know you are still in Washington, and will do all you can toward making the times better, and I shall direct this letter to you there so you will know what has become of me, and won't worry about me any more.

"Good-by; give my love to Mr. Nixon and Mr. Mason and Miss Jennie, when you go back to Smithville. Doctor."

Tears were standing in Congressman Swanson's eyes long before he had finished reading the letter; and when he had concluded, they were running down his cheeks.

He laid the letter upon the table, and felt for his handkerchief.

"Strange what brutes some men are" he muttered; "nobody could fail to see, with half an eye, that Doctor was a perfectly harmless fellow that wouldn't hurt a fly. And to arrest him and put him on the rock-pile! It's an outrage, and I wish I had the brutes where I could fix 'em.

"Poor Doctor! Well, he's at rest at last. Simple fellow, but true as steel to his friends and the cause of the laborer. Wish I knew how near he and Nixon and the rest are right about those matters. I'd like to do something for 'em if I only knew what was needed, and could get Congress to agree to it. Anyhow I'll

write and find out the particulars of Doctor's death, and see that he has a headstone."

And he did. In a country graveyard, in a western state, stands a plain white slab, at the head of a grassy mound, and upon it is the simple inscription:

"DOCTOR."

"He was a tramp, but a lover of his fellowmen, and a true friend to those he loved."

Side by side with this mound is another, equally green but without monument or slab of any kind; and beneath it lies all that remains of the once prosperous manufacturer—Hardiman.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Silent Member makes the longest speech of his life; and proposes to 'nitiate the New Member at Nixon's. The initiation. What Jo Miller's wife said about Jo's attempt at dressing the baby. Jo starts out to tell a story but is interrupted.

Going home from the shop, one evening, Nixon met the silent member, and stopped to shake hands with him.

It was a year and more, nearly two years, since Mason's boarding-house had been broken up and its boarders scattered by Jennie's marriage, but most of the men were still working in Smithville, and still maintained more or less intimate social relations with Nixon and his wife and her father.

Their threat of accepting an invitation to a Sunday dinner off of the new set of crockeryware presented to Jennie upon her wedding-day, had been carried into execution and repeated on several occasions; and at least a portion of them were in the habit of dropping in, at odd times and without ceremony to chat of labor matters, or of anything else which interested them.

One or two were married: the evident happiness of Nixon and Jennie in their new relations of husband and wife, having so impressed them, they declared, as to compel them to seek for happiness by the same method. And as the maidens, who had thus joined them in the search, were those with whom Jennie,

now Mrs. Nixon, had been on terms of intimacy before her own marriage, it was but natural that this intimacy should continue now that they also had taken upon themselves the duties and pleasures of the married state.

Among those who had not married, was "the silent member" as he was still called among his former mates.

As little given to conversation now as then, he yet appeared quite as much as any to enjoy these occasional dinners or accidental meetings at Nixon's, and if he did not talk much, he still spoke with the same appearance of regarding what he did say as of a weighty nature, and requiring considerable care in the saying.

Meeting Nixon on the night referred to as both were going home from their work, he shook the proffered hand heartily, dropped it, and taking Nixon by the arm, led him off of the sidewalk and half-way to the middle of the street (although not another soul was in sight in either direction), turned himself and Nixon so that they faced each other, and then said in a confidential tone of voice:

"See here, Nixon, the boys have all heard about it, and they want to come round as soon as it will be convenient to your wife, and be introduced to the new member of the society. And if he isn't 'nitiated yet, they'd like to help 'nitiate him. They have heard that he's a ten-pounder and they want to express their pleasure at the progress your society is making. Several of the societies organized after yours was, got their first new member before you did; but they ain't none of 'em got a ten-pounder for the first one. How'd next Saturday night do for the 'nitiation? Wife got strong enough to preside at the ceremony—whoooo!"

This was the longest speech the "silent member" had ever been known to make; and if it had been made in the presence of numbers would doubtless have cost him his title. As it was, it evidently came near bringing him to a state of exhaustion, for when he had finished, he emitted a long breath audibly, as if he had but just ended a hard climb up a steep hill.

Possibly, however, he desired to prove that, unusual as had been the amount of breath expended in speaking, he still had breath left to throw away.

"Of course she will," returned Nixon, reaching for and shaking the "silent member's" hand again. "At least," he added a little cautiously, "I reckon she will. Tell you what I'll do, I'll just find out when it will suit Jennie and let you know and you can tell the others. Jennie will be pleased enough to have you all come. She thinks there isn't another such a baby as ours to be found anywhere; and I reckon myself he is pretty peart for a chap only a month old to-morrow. You must not forget to tell all the fellows. Jennie will be but half-satisfied if everyone of the old crowd is not on hand."

"Oh, they'll be there. Just you let us know when it will be convenient for 'em to come and you won't find any of 'em missing 'nless they're too sick to get there. First we thought we would make a surprise party of it, but then we concluded maybe we had better let you know, so as to be sure the candidate would be ready to be 'nitiated. Whoooo!"

And again the "silent member" gave evidence of having breath to throw away.

"Jennie," said Nixon, with a pleased look, as he came into the house and the room where the young mother sat with her baby on her lap; "Jennie, the

boys say they want to come round and be introduced to the new member of our society, and want you to say at what time it will be convenient for you to have them."

He bent over and kissed the lips that were put up to him, and then rather awkwardly pulled at the baby's clothes in an effort to attract it's attention, and enable him to see its face.

"Is that what they call baby?" laughed Jennie. "Why, have them come any time, almost. I am strong enough now, and baby is just as pretty as he can be. Won't it be nice to have them all come to see him at once? I hope he will be good and not cry; I know he will, though. He is always good, isn't he John? That is, almost always," she added as she noticed a somewhat puzzled expression overspread John's face, and remembered how, only the night before, he had got up and lit the lamp no less than three times to help her try and find out what was the matter with baby that made him cry so.

"Of course a baby will cry when it has the colic," she continued, with a slightly injured air. "You couldn't sleep yourself if you had the colic, you know you couldn't."

"Of course I couldn't," echoed Nixon. "Baby is just as good as he can be, I am sure, and nobody has a better or prettier one. But you don't suppose he will have the colic often, do you, Jennie? Do babies generally have the colic often?"

"Of course not. At any rate, ours isn't going to, is oo, baby? Tourse oo isn't. Mamma won't let oo. Isn't he pretty, John, isn't he though?"

"Of course he is. Couldn't help being, with such a dad," laughed Nixon. And he kissed his wife and

passed his hand caressingly over her face.

"And so I shall tell the boys to come at any time, shall I?"

"Yes; only I must know beforehand, so as to get up a big supper for them. I want everything just as nice as you think we can afford."

"We can afford a pretty good supper I guess, when it is in honor of him," said Nixon, prodding the baby with his finger, and provoking it into screwing up its face, preparatory to a cry.

"I knew you would say so, but its awfully good in you all the same. I'll talk with the girl that is helping me, and let you know when to tell them to come."

"They were talking of next Saturday night, if it is convenient to you."

"I'll see—I guess that is as good a time as any, and I am so anxious to have them see baby, I want them to come just as soon as we can get things ready; I will go and talk with the girl now."

Jennie arose as she spoke, put the baby in its father's arms, kissed it half a dozen times, and passed out of the room in search of the girl who had been employed to assist about the house until Mrs. Nixon should fully regain her strength. A few evenings later, there was heard a bustle and a clatter and a chatter at the gate, and then upon the walk in front of Nixon's cottage. Then from the steps and upon the porch came the sound of laughter and of hurried footsteps, and then the door was opened without ceremony, and the folks began to crowd in in jolly confusion.

"Where is he?"

"Bring him out and let us see him!"

"They say he's a bouncer."

"Wonder if he looks like his dad, or whether instead he is pretty, like his ma?"

"Trot him out and let us get a good look at him."

"We are going to 'nitiate him."

And the jolly, laughing crowd pushed in through the door and on through the hall, past Nixon, who was there to welcome them; a few stopping to shake his hand, but more only giving him a nod, accompanied maybe by some joking remark, pushed on into the room where sat Jennie with her baby.

Here the women of the party unceremoniously crowded the men aside and themselves formed the inner ring of a circle which gathered about the babe and its mother. They kissed baby, and cooed to it, and declared it was just as pretty as it could be, and that it looked like Jennie, and like John, and like Jennie's father, Mr. Mason, and like an angel, and like a pink; which latter comparison was the best of the lot; for whatever else baby was, he certainly was pink.

While the women in the inner circle, thus cooed and fondled the baby and complimented its mother, the men, who constituted the outer circle, stood nudging each other with their elbows, and made remarks in pretendedly low and confidential tones, intended, of course, to reach the ears of the women.

"Looks like General Grant," said one.

"Like Jefferson Davis," said another, "I saw Jeff. once, and he looks just like him to a dot."

"What a beautiful head of hair," remarked a third, admiringly. (Baby didn't have a bit.)

"Exact picture of Buffalo Bill."

"'Spose they will conclude to try and raise him?"

"What d'y' reckon they painted him that color for?"

And then as the inner circle began casting glances of indignation and gathering wrath in that direction, the outer circle swayed back and showed indications of being about to break and scatter ignominiously.

"The goat is getting uneasy," called out the "silent member."

"Bring forth the royal bumper, and let him bump," cried another, at which there were other indignant demonstrations from the women, and other evidences of demoralization and threatened retreat from the men.

"Bring in the paraphernalia and let's initiate him."

And then there was lifted up the steps and rolled into the room a fine new baby carriage, with the daintiest of blue silk linings and a blue silk canopy, and the softest of pillows, trimmed with lace, and two little wraps to go with the pillows—one of the finest and softest wool, and the other of silk to match the linings and the canopy.

"Oh! isn't that pretty?" cried Jennie. "Did you folks really buy that for baby? How very very kind you are. I cannot begin to tell you how much I thank you."

"Put him in it, put the kid in the carriage; we want to 'nitiate him."

One of the women, wife of one of Mason's old boarders, and a former girl friend of Jennie's took the baby carefully from its mother's arms and laid him softly in the carriage.

"Bring in the goat."

"All right, here he is," and the "silent member" crowded to the front, reached down into the depths of his great overcoat pocket and pulled out a fat, woolly

Newfoundland puppy, and gravely deposited it in the carriage with the baby.

"That's the goat!" he said. "See him go it!"

Then everybody laughed and crowded about the carriage and the baby, and the dog; and the baby wriggled its head and tried to wriggle its body but couldn't, so it doubled up its fists and squinted up its eyes instead.

And the puppy squirmed about and tried to stand on its feet among the pillows, and could'nt, and rolled over and got up and licked the hands reached out to it, and tried to lick baby's face, and had to be put at baby's feet instead, and then watched to see that he staid there.

"Isn't it sweet?" said one of the women, bending over the carriage, and touching baby's face.

"It is," said the "silent member."

"Looks like its mother—no, like its father," said another of the women.

"It does," said the "silent member."

"Worth its weight in gold," remarked a third.

"Well, no—I reckon not," replied the "silent member". "I got this one of Jo Bank for a dollar and a half, and Jo said he had two more for sale at the same price."

"Oh, you awful, awful fellow, you!" screamed all the women in concert. "We were talking about the baby," and they fell upon him and beat him upon the back with their clenched hands, using them as if striking with a hammer, and pushed him out of the room into the hall.

"I thought you were talking about the pup all the time," he said, as he pulled off his overcoat and hung

it up on a nail in the hall, where the others were hanging theirs.

Then they all came laughing and talking, back into the best room, and sat and chatted and joked and told anecdotes, until at half-past nine o'clock, supper was announced, and all filed out into the next room and took seats at the table.

Everybody felt at home, and everybody enjoyed the meal and ate heartily, as men and women who labor hard, and are strong and well, always do.

They praised the cooking and the coffee, the cook and the hostess, and talked of the time when she cooked for them, recalling little incidents, pleasant to the memory of the time before Jennie and Nixon were married, when they boarded at Mr. Mason's, and Nixon brought wood and water for Jennie, and so, they insisted, got madly jealous if any of the rest so much as lifted a finger to help her.

"You don't suppose I was afraid of any of you fellows do you?" laughed Nixon.

"But you was afraid of all of us, yourself included."

Everybody laughed and Jennie Nixon said:

"I believe that last is true, for John was awful slow about speaking up."

At which they laughed again, and grew still more jolly, and jokes flew thick and fast.

And through it all the "silent member" said never a word.

But he kept his knife and fork going, and had his cup refilled with coffee three times.

When they had finished eating, the women drove the men into the parlor, while they remained to help "rid up" the table, so they said; which was true, in fact, although not the whole truth—that portion of the

truth which remained unspoken being that they were going to have a talk all to themselves while they worked, without any man around to bother them.

"Men don't know anything about women and babies," said one of them, as she rattled the dishes about in the sink. "I used to suppose they did, but they don't; there's my Jo, now; just as kind as he can be, and anxious to help me care for baby, but, laws-ee, you ought just to see him try to dress the young one. I caught him the other day trying to hold baby's dress up in one hand and put baby into it with the other, feet first, like you'd put a puppy into a grain sack. He held the dress up in his left hand and baby by the back of her little slip in the other, and was making dabs with her, trying to put her, feet first, into the neck of the dress. Baby seemed to think it good fun and would coo and kick out her little pink feet, and Jo couldn't get both of them into the dress at once, and he would lift her up and make another dab like, all the time holding her by the back of her little slip, which was all she had on, and which had gathered into a band about her waist; and all the time, Jo looked as solemn and as awkward as he did the time he asked me to marry him. I watched them through a crack in the wall, where the plastering is off between the kitchen and the sitting-room, until I couldn't keep from laughing out loud any longer, and then I went in and sent Jo about his business and dressed her myself."

"That's just like a man," chimed in another of the women. "Now, there's my Sam would do anything in the world for me. Brings in wood and water, and rocks baby's cradle while I wash up the supper dishes, and never leaves me of an evening, except when he

just has to go to lodge to pay his dues, and keep from being fined, but he aint got no sense about some things. Why, do you know, I sent him down town once last summer to get something for baby a dress, he was in long clothes then, you know. I told him I wanted something thin and pretty; something baby would look nice in when we took him out riding in his carriage, and what do you suppose he got?"

"I am sure I have not the least idea," said one. "You never can begin to tell what a man is going to do."

"Expect he got some jeans," suggested another.

"Well, as sure as I am alive he brought home a whole bolt of musquito netting, red musquito netting. Think of dressing baby up in great coarse red musquito netting and taking him out to ride in a carriage with green trimmings."

"Just like a man. They haven't got any sense about such things."

"Sam said I told him to get something thin and comfortable, and he thought I wanted what I said I wanted. And as for the color he insisted that baby would look pretty in red, and was more than half a mind to get huffy because I wouldn't have it and made him take it right back and tell the storekeeper I would come down and get what I wanted in a day or two."

"I do believe John would know better than to buy musquito netting for baby's dresses," said Jennie Nixon, "but I am not going to trust him to dress baby until he gets bigger, for I don't believe he would know whether the dress gathered in at the neck or about the waist. In fact, he asked me the other day if baby wouldn't look better in short clothes than he did in his long dresses, and said if he was me he believed he would do it at once

—and baby only just a month old then. But come girls Mary can finish the work in the morning. Let's go into the sitting-room where the gentlemen are."

"Its funny now about the women not knowing anything about our work," one of the men was saying. "I laughed more the other day to see my wife try to"— but just here the door opened and the ladies entered and the man who was just going to tell something illustrative of woman's ignorance of some things, changed his mind and began talking of something else, and the conversation became general, the ladies bearing equal part with the gentlemen.

Finally some one touched upon the labor question, and the work of organization, and Mr. Mason was asked for news of the movement, and gave such as he had, which all considered both interesting and encouraging.

Then someone asked Nixon what audiences he had while upon a little speaking trip that he had made into the country a short time before.

"Did the people turn out to hear you pretty well?" was asked.

"As a general thing, yes. I spoke in schoolhouses almost always and usually they were pretty well filled, sometimes they were crowded."

"Were you the only speaker or did someone go with you?"

"Oh! Mr. Miller here was with me all the time, and the chairman, of the county committee of the county we were canvassing, took us about and introduced us at the meetings generally. Sometimes he could not go and then somebody else did the introducing. We staid nights with some of the farmers who are with us in the fight, going home with them after speaking, and you may be sure they treated us to the best they had."

"I did not think I should want any thing to eat for a month when I got back but I guess I have managed to destroy about as large a quantity of provisions as usual."

"Ask him about the speech he made down in the Quaker settlement," suggested Miller.

"Better ask Miller about the speech he failed to make to the Quakers," retorted Nixon.

"Tell us about it."

"Yes, let's have it."

"Don't be mean now and keep a good thing all to yourselves just because you can."

"If Nixon won't tell it boys, I guess I'll have to," said Miller.

He hitched his chair forward a little, so as to get a fuller view of his audience, and was just on the point of beginning when his wife came and laid their baby in his arms.

"Here Jo," she said, "it's twelve o'clock. Time everybody was going. All the women are getting their things on."

"All right. Here, take the kid till I get my overcoat."

"But what about the Quaker settlement and the speech you were going to tell us about; we can't afford to lose that," called out one of the men as a general stir passed about the room.

"No indeed."

"Too late to-night boys," returned Miller. "The ladies have their things on ready to go, and anyway we ought not to keep Mrs. Nixon up any longer, but if you will all come round to my house some night soon I'll tell it."

"Say next Saturday night."

"All right, Saturday night it is; come round all of you

and we will have some oysters and a cracker or two and I'll tell the yarn if Nixon won't."

"We'll be there," said the silent member, at which everybody laughed and the silent member appeared disgusted and said they didn't know what they were laughing about, at which they laughed the more.

Then they shook hands all around with Mr. and Mrs. Nixon and Mr. Mason, not forgetting the baby either, who was lying wide awake in his new carriage with the puppy fast asleep at his feet, after which they filed out of the cottage and down the steps, and on out into the street where those in advance paused a moment to say good-night to those in the rear, and then separating went to their own homes.

"I hope you are not too tired," said Nixon to his wife when they were all gone.

"Oh, no! I am not a bit weary," returned Mrs. Nixon, "but it is late and time we were in bed. Bring baby and let's go."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Jo Miller tells of the entertainment which he and Nixon gave down in the Quaker settlement.

"Come Jo, tell us about the experience you and Nixon had down in the Quaker settlement."

"Yes, yes, tell us about it; that's what we came for."

They were all at Miller's house and sitting round Miller's best room with a roaring fire in the stove, for it was getting late in the fall, in fact was in the first days of winter, and there was a cold snap upon the country.

Mrs. Nixon was there with her baby, and Mrs. Brown with her baby, and Mrs. Secor with her baby, and the Miller baby was there, of course, because she lived there. And Mrs. Nixon, and Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Secor, and Mrs. Miller had all shown their babies to each other, and to those women that had no babies, and had introduced the babies to everybody and tried to get them to shake hands and say: "How-de-do," and everybody had said: "Aren't they sweet," and, "Did you ever see anything so cute?" And then the darlings had been tucked away—the Miller baby in her crib and the others on the bed in the room where Miller and his wife slept. Then all the men had been warned, "not to go in there now and throw your heavy overcoats on baby," after which the respective mothers had withdrawn themselves to the kitchen to help Mrs. Miller set the table, and get things ready for the supper which was to come

later, not forgetting to rush back every two minutes to see "if baby is all right and sleeping."

And the men had hung their overcoats in the hall, and had tried to hang their hats on top of them, and had failed to make them stay, so had piled them up on the floor in the corner, and warmed themselves at the stove, and spoken of the weather and said, "it was a pretty cold snap for the first one, and sort of pinched a fellow," and had agreed that it was and that it did, and that it would be colder to-morrow unless the wind shifted, which it probably would not do; and that the fire felt mighty comfortable, and finally that Jo Miller should proceed to tell them the experience which he and Nixon had had in the Quaker settlement at the time they went there to make a Greenback speech.

"All right, boys, I'll tell it. I said I would and I will, though I know I can't make you see it just as it struck us. But it was this way:"

"The chairman of the county committee had been going around with us, piloting us about and introducing us to the people at our meetings; but one day something occurred that compelled him to be at home and he left us with the horse and buggy in which we had been getting about, and he rode into town with an old farmer where we had spent the night, and we had to find our appointment for the afternoon and evening for ourselves."

"Well, we got to the afternoon appointment all right, and had a good audience and a good time; spoke in a schoolhouse and woke the people up considerably, I reckon, for they cheered both Nixon and myself repeatedly and appeared to be well pleased with what we said.

"We cut our speeches tolerably short there, because we had a good long drive to our night appointment, and

the roads were pretty bad back in the country where we were, and we knew we had all we could do to make it in time.

"We got directions of the fellows where we spoke in the afternoon and started; but the road was so crooked, and so many other roads branched off this way and that, that we got to be uncertain which road to take at last, and Nixon got out and went up to a farm house and made inquiries. Now whether they misdirected him on purpose, or whether Nixon misunderstood of course we don't know; anyway we took the wrong road, and after driving until almost dark without seeing anybody of whom we could make further inquiries, we brought up in a settlement of Quakers ten miles from where we wanted to be, and from the place where we were billed to speak.

"It was then too late to think of getting to the place where we were expected, but we thought there was no use in losing the time entirely, and that we might as well get up a little meeting where we were and try our hands at converting the Quakers to the Greenback idea."

"You know the Quakers are all Republicans; I never heard of one that was a Democrat. They were all Abolitionists before the war and have been Republicans to a man ever since.

"Well, we found a place where they said we might stay all night, and after putting up our horse we started out to find the moderator and get permission to speak in the schoolhouse.

"We found his house without any trouble, and in answer to our knock he came to the door. He was a Quaker, of course, and dressed Quaker style in drab clothes that had a kind of a sober look of their own, as if they were Quakers themselves and had joined meetings

before their owner had, and were trying to set him an xample of decorum.

"The man himself was a pretty nice looking old fellow, tall and fresh complected, and but for his Quaker garb would have been right jolly looking. In fact, I am satisfied now that the old rascal liked a joke better than anybody, and that, if it had not been for the example which his clothes constantly set before him he would have just run over with good natured fun. He asked us in, and we went in and took seats in the sitting-room and chatted a moment, and then Nixon, who had agreed to do the talking on the occasion, told him what we had come for, to get permission to hold a meeting and speak in the schoolhouse.

"'What kind of a speech is thee going to make, friends?' asked the old fellow, tying us sort of sharp like.

"'A political speech;' Nixon told him. 'We want to talk to the people on the issues of the hour.'

"'Going to make a political speech is thee? What kind of a political speech does thee intend making?'

"'Oh,' said Nixon, 'a Greenback speech. A speech about the financial policy of the government; what it has done and what it ought to do to enable the people to get more of the benefits of their own labor.'

"'Is thee going to scandalize the Republicans?' asked the old Quaker rubbing his chin and looking sort of interested.

"That kind of rattled Nixon a bit; it came so sudden and unexpected like, and was put in such a queer way, and he stammered out:

"'Why no, Mr. Quake—that is mister—mister.'

"He was going to say, 'Mr. Quaker,' but caught him-

self in time to bite the word in two, and said 'mister—mister,' instead.

"'Thee can call me Jamison if thee wishes,' said the old Quaker, and I know he wanted to laugh, only his clothes wouldn't let him. They told him they would report him to the meeting if he did.

"'Why no, Mr. Jamison,' said Nixon, 'we don't propose to scandalize any body or any party; what we want to do is to tell the people the evil effects of some of the laws upon the statute books of the nation, and what ought to be done to prevent other panics like the last one.'

"'We consider the Republican and Democratic parties about equally responsible for these laws, and in our speeches we say so, and try to induce the people to leave them and come to ours—a new party—in defense of their own interests and in opposition to the monopolies.'

"'Then thee cannot have the schoolhouse,' said the old Quaker, and it seemed to me that his clothes repeated, 'Thee cannot have the schoolhouse.'"

"That was a stumper sure enough; but we were not going to be bluffed too easily, and we both fell to arguing with him and trying every way to get him to consent, and he finally sort of straightened out his legs and looked at himself as if to get the consent of his clothes to what he was going to say, and then said he:"

"'I will tell thee what I will do for thee, friends. If thee will agree to scandalize the Democrats and say nothing at all about the Republicans, I'll not only let thee have the schoolhouse but I'll go about among the friends and neighbors and get thee up an audience. What does thee say to this proposition?'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the crowd, and they drew their chairs a little nearer the speaker.

"Well, the old Quaker had you didn't he? What did you tell him? Did you agree to it?"

"You see it was this way," resumed Miller, leaning forward and laying the first two fingers of his right hand in the open palm of the left; "we were like the old lady when her husband got into a fight with a bear. She said 'she hadn't no prejudice for nor agin neither one of the parties engaged in the ruction, nor she wasn't a goin' to mix up in none of their affairs; she spected one was just about as much to blame as t'other.' So far as the old political parties are concerned we reformers have no prejudice against one as compared with the other. They are about equally guilty, and neither could continue to exist without the other, for both are sectional parties and both live upon sectional bitterness and sectional misunderstandings. As you all know, Nixon and myself, all of our speakers, in fact, are in the habit of giving it to each of the old parties in turn, and as equally as we know how to divide it. But the old Quaker had us fast and tight. There was no place to hold a meeting except the schoolhouse, and this he would not give us permission to use unless we accepted his proposition of giving it to the Democrats, and keeping still about the Republicans.

"We tried argument, but it was no use; the old fellow had us; and if he had wanted to do different I am satisfied he could not have got the consent of his clothes; and, finally, after going out and consulting together about it a little more, we went back and told him we would agree to what he asked, and should expect him to drum us up a good crowd, which he promised to do.

"Nixon and I allowed we would get some fun out of the affair anyway, and we sort of needed a little some-

thing of that kind to wake us up, for we had been having pretty hard times of it, speaking twice each day and driving in a buggy—three in a seat most of the time—over rough roads from one appointment to another, never getting to bed till midnight or after, and then up early to breakfast. I tell you boys the grangers work early and late for what they get, and the chap that eats breakfast with them eats it before sun up, as a general thing.

"Well, Nixon and I went back to where we had put out our horse and got supper and then went over to the schoolhouse. Nixon had agreed to do the speaking—"

"Hold on there Miller," broke in Nixon, "you must tell this thing straight. I didn't agree to do all the speaking, but only to speak first. You were to close, and each was to speak about an hour."

"Oh, well now, I just expected Nixon would say that," laughed Miller, tilting back in his chair and letting it down again with a thump. "Anyway, Nixon was to speak first, and I reckon I promised to say something after he was through if I could think of anything to say."

"Did you have many out to hear you?" asked one of the men, as Miller paused.

"Many out," echoed Miller. "I should say so! I don't know how that old Quaker did it, but I believe he put men or boys on horses the moment we left him, and sent them on the dead run all over that neighborhood. Many out—the schoolhouse was full of drab coats; not a vacant seat, and not a woman or a boy in the lot; but every old Quaker, or at least every third man brought a tallow dip which he proceeded to light and turn sideways until the blaze had caused a little pool of melted tallow to fall upon the desk in front of him, on which he

placed the candle in an upright position and held it firm until the tallow hardened and kept the candle in position.

"It was the most solemn looking audience I ever cast my eyes on; and I tell you I was glad Nixon was to do the speaking."

"Was to speak first, you mean," interrupted Nixon.

"There you go again," retorted Miller good naturedly. "Boys, I wish you would keep Nixon still until I finish this little yarn. How can I talk if he keeps bothering me in this way?"

"You go ahead Miller, and we will take care of Nixon; if he interrupts you any more we will put him out."

"All right; you do it. As I was saying, it was the most solemn looking audience I ever saw, and I was glad Nixon was to speak—"

"First," said Nixon.

"Instead of myself," continued Miller, without noticing that Nixon had spoken. "Our own particular Quaker, the moderator of the district, took a seat behind the little table on the rostrum, and lit his candle, and set it up before him just as the rest had done, and then arose and introduced Mr. Nixon as the speaker of the evening."

"He said the first speaker," again interposed Mr. Nixon.

"Shall we put him out, Miller? If you say so, we'll put him out."

"No, let him stay; he will likely want to know what kind of a speech he made.

"You know, boys, Nixon sort of prides himself in telling an anecdote well; and to be fair about it I don't know of any of our speakers that tells one better. The

crowd that don't laugh at Nixon's jokes don't want to laugh, and can't be made to.

"Nixon started off all right. He addressed them as friends and fellow citizens. I was afraid he would get tangled again, and say fellow Quakers, but he did not. He started in all right and then he told an anecdote; it was one of his funniest, and of a stock that he keeps especially to wake up a crowd when they show signs of getting uneasy or out of humor, and which always brings the house down.

"But he might as well have told it to a lot of telegraph poles as to that crowd of old Quakers, for not one of 'em so much as cracked a smile. I was watching them, and not one of 'em moved a muscle of the face. Then Nixon told 'em another, that if anything was funnier than the first, but it fell dead; not a man in the audience so much as nodded his head; and they heard another, and then another, with an air of quiet endurance that was laughable in itself, though it rather irritated Nixon. Once or twice I thought he had 'em, for I was sure I saw some of them act as though they could hardly hold in any longer; but I reckon they were afraid of their clothes, and so didn't do it.

"Then Nixon started off on a new tack. He began about slavery before the war. At this the old fellows pricked up their ears—as the saying is—and appeared to be getting interested. That encouraged Nixon and he denounced slavery in good round terms, and the audience cheered him. Then he referred to Lincoln and the emancipation proclamation, and they cheered again. By this time Nixon was getting well warmed up and got on to his high horse and spun it off right lively for a few minutes and wound up a burst after this style:

"But, gentlemen, African slavery never made a mil-

lionaire. No man ever accumulated a million of dollars by the labor of men who knew themselves slaves. It was not until a scheme had been devised under which, while believing themselves free, while believing themselves to be producing wealth for themselves, and for those they loved, the wealth they produce is secretly transferred, by means of a vicious system of finance and vicious laws, into the pockets of others than those who produce it.

"While the patriotic masses of the North were spending their money and spilling their blood to crush out negro slavery, a set of men, traitors to the people and the Republic, traitors to God and humanity, were plotting to enslave both the black man and the white, plotting to make serfs of every wealth-producer in the land, no matter whether he lived north of Mason's and Dixon's line or south of it; no matter whether he worked in the cotton and the cane, or whether he raised wheat and corn; no matter whether he worked in the field or the factory, the workshop, or the mine. The Democratic party has much to answer for; before the war it was the champion of negro slavery; since then it has worked hand in hand with the Republican party in the interests of the corporations, and has helped to establish and maintain a financial system which has impoverished the people and made —not one millionaire but a thousand; and not millionaires only, but men possessed of a hundred million. The Democrats equally with the Republicans stand convicted——

"I knew just what Nixon was going to say, because I had heard him use those very words on several occasions before in his speeches. He was going to say, the Republican party stood convicted before an intelligent public of crimes against the prosperity, and liberties of

the people, etc., but just then our old Quaker, who sat behind the table, quietly reached over, took the candle in front of him and—whoof—he blew it out.

"And then every other old fellow in the crowd reached for his candle and half of them blew them out, and the rest were just on the point of doing so when Nixon hesitated, hemmed once or twice and began again."

"The Republican party, gentlemen, stands convicted of having struck the chains from the limbs of the black man, and for this it deserves the thanks of every true lover of humanity the whole world over.

"By the time Nixon had got this out our old fellow was striking a match to light his candle again; and as soon as he did that, every other man who had blown out his candle stretched over and lit it at a neighbor's who had not extinguished his, and then they dropped more liquid tallow on the little pile already on the desks, and sticking their candles into it again gave Nixon their undivided attention.

"Nixon stumbled about for five minutes or so, trying to find a thread that lead in the right direction, and then thought he had found it, and proceeded to mount his high horse and grow eloquent again. But it was a hard road and up hill. He knew that our old Quaker, the moderator, who had got us up the crowd, had posted every one of the others, and that blowing out the candles was a note of warning; that it was to tell him he was getting on dangerous ground, and must keep hands off the Republican party or he would instantly find himself in the dark, and without an audience.

"Well, as I said, he stumbled about for a time, and then struck another lead and followed it up for a few minutes all right, but suddenly he came to a point where it was impossible to go on without referring to the Repub-

lican party in uncomplimentary terms; and again the old fellow reached for his candle, and then twenty other old fellows reached for theirs, and Nixon stopped short off, coughed, took a drink of water, and wiped his mouth with his handkerchief.

"Then he started in again on a new trail, which seemed to promise all right.

"It ran along over perfectly level ground for a time, and there seemed never a log or a rock in the way, and Nixon warmed up and grew eloquent again, and was going at a lively pace down the trail, whooping it up to the Democrats for their connection with the monopolies when, before he really knew it, he ran butt up against a thicket, under which it was impossible not to see the Republican and Democratic jack-rabbits sitting side by side and equally guilty of depredation upon the orchards, and gardens, and grain fields of the people. And again the old fellows reached for their candles, and again Nixon stopped, coughed, got out his handkerchief and wiped his mouth after taking a drink of water.

"Well, to make the story short, Nixon talked and sweat, backed up and started, and started and backed up, and sweat and coughed, and took a drink and wiped his mouth, until I thought I would die with wanting to laugh; and there those old fellows in drab clothes sat as solemn as the crack of doom—whatever that is—and held him to his contract to scandalize the Democrats and steer clear of the Republicans, till finally, Nixon gave it up for a bad job and sat down."

"I put in my time though," said Nixon. "It was hard work, but I did it; but, what do you fellows think? When the old Quaker who presided over the meeting, introduced Mr. Miller as the next speaker, Miller got up and stammered out that he was sick and not able to

speak, and he didn't and wouldn't; I have not forgiven him yet, and I think now, I never will."

Miller had been repeatedly interrupted by the laughter of the men while telling his story, and now they laughed again, laughed long and heartily.

"That old Quaker that put up the job on you fellows, certainly was a good one," said one of the crowd, when their laughter had subsided a little; "I'd give a dollar just for a sight of him."

"But, what did he say when Miller backed out of speaking?"

"Oh," replied Nixon, "that was as rich as any of it. The old rascal had the gall to say, 'that while they regretted that sudden illness prevented the other gentleman from contributing to the entertainment of the evening'—entertainment, mind you—'he was sure that those present had been well repaid for coming out, and that if convenient to us, they would be glad to hear the entertainment repeated at some future time.'"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, what did you say to that?"

"I told him," said Nixon, "'I didn't think it would be convenient for us to speak in that neighborhood again soon; but if any of those present would do us the favor to attend at our afternoon speaking on the morrow, we would certainly try to make it interesting to them.'"

"And did any of them go?"

"If they did they didn't wear drab clothes. I watched, hoping some of them would come; and if they had I was just going to do my best to wear out and use up the Republican—"

Before he could finish what he was saying, the door between the sitting-room and kitchen opened and a woman's voice was heard saying:

"Oysters all ready to serve; you just run in and see

if the babies are all right, and tell the men to come out to supper."

"We're coming," said the silent member; and this was the first time he had spoken during the evening.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Uncle Billy Bowlegs' Soliliquy.—Uucle Billy and the Mortgage Note-System.—The Mortgage Note-System and the Land Owner.—The South Immediately After the War.

"De town am on a bloom; yaas sah; dat's what de Cunnel sade; he sade de town was on a bloom. Spect he meant it was sort a unfoldin' an a widenin' out, lak de mornin' glory vines down in de corn-field on de creek bottom.

"Wal let her bloom. I aint a gwine to stop her bloomin. Spect I lak to see her bloom; spect maybe it make better times for de cullud folks; anyway I aint gwine to stop 'er," and Deacon William Bascomb familiarly known as Uncle Billy Bowlegs, climbed into his wagon, whipped up the single steer, which, hitched between the shafts of a one horse, or one ox wagon, constituted the propelling power of the outfit, and moved off in the direction of his humble cabin.

Uncle Billy is a character in his way, and in his way a pretty good character. That is, his character is good as far as it goes in that direction. If there are weaknesses anywhere in Uncle Billy's character they but prove him man and brother, since, white and black alike, we all have weaknesses somewhere. Some men have small weaknesses and are fond of chickens, especially chickens of "frying size." Others have greater weaknesses exhibited in a love for acquiring railroads, gob-

bling up coal mines, making corners in stocks, wheat, oats, corn, cotton, and the like.

Uncle Billy has none of these larger weaknesses; he never even so much as contemplated the acquisition of a railroad, never sought to gobble mines of any kind, nor attempted to make a corner in anything, but is quite content and happy without owning so much as a corner lot, though he does own, and is proud of owning, the steer which he drives between the shafts of his one horse, or one ox wagon. And he has a right to be proud; he raised that steer from a little calf and it is his.

He was a slave once, no doubt, for he is an old man, though lively on his legs, albeit they are shaped a good deal like the rainbow, and he has always lived where he was born in a Southern state.

But he is jolly still, in spite of his age—and his legs. He can dance a jig on occasions, or can preach to the "brederin" when the regular pastor is prevented—by a sudden rise in the creek, or from any other unforeseen or providential cause—from being present; but as he is rather a small man, and short, and as the pulpit in his church was built for a man with longer body and straighter legs, he prefers on such occasions to take his text and preach his sermon in front of, rather than behind the desk.

He tends a few acres on rented land, giving a fourth of the cotton for the use of the land, breaking up the ground and tending the crop with his steer. Hauls a bit of wood for this or that white man, or possibly some colored brother, works a day now and then for somebody in town, or does any odd jobs that come in his way, and is happy and hopeful, and as honest as his circumstances will reasonably admit of, which is no more than any man in the land has a right to be. Just now

he is returning to his cabin on the outskirts of the town with a sack of corn meal, half a side of meat, and a gallon jug of cane molasses—and the information that the "town is on a bloom."

"Boom," was what the Colonel had said, but Uncle Billy had failed to overhear correctly and had understood it bloom, which, with the kind permission of the reader, I will suggest is quite as good a word and quite as expressive as the other.

Uncle Billy has not paid for the rations he is taking home with him, but he will pay for them in a few days or weeks.

His cotton is ready to pick, and when it is gathered and the gin—which is a machine with a lot of little fine circular saws that run between teeth with a certain width of space separating them, and catch the cotton as it is pressed up against them and half cuts, half tears the lint from the seed. When the gin has separated the lint from the seed and pressed it into a hard bale, like a bale of hay, but weighing from four hundred and fifty to five hundred pounds; when this has been done, the man who owns the ground on which Uncle Billy raised the cotton, will go with him and see it sold, and see that what the old man owes the merchant is paid out of what the cotton sells for.

For the land owner has stood security for Uncle Billy with the merchant, or rather he has himself become responsible to the merchant, and when Uncle Billy has run out of rations has given him an order on the merchant, and while the merchant charged the amount of the order up to the land owner, the land owner charged it up to Uncle Billy, the understanding all round being that the debt is to be paid out of the cotton when it is ready for market.

Now this would be a very nice arrangement, both for Uncle Billy and the land owner, but for one thing, and that is, when the land owner arranges with the merchant for credit for himself and his renters, or for those whom he hires by the month, he gives his note at interest, usually 8 per cent., payable when the cotton is gathered—about the first to the fifteenth of October.

The merchant gives the land owner credit upon his books for the amount of the note taken; the note he uses as collateral to get money from the bank to buy goods with. The note being in the shape of a mortgage, or what is called a mortgage note, covering the land and everything else owned by the giver of the note, even to the waving of all exemption and homestead laws of the state and United States! The note being given by a land holder, and being a mortgage note, is naturally about the best collateral a bank can have, and a very large portion of the business of the Southern banks, and nearly all of that of the planters, is done upon this mortgage note-system of credit.

Uncle Billy has just got the last order from his landlord that he will get until his cotton is ginned and sold, and the proceeds of this order are in his wagon in the shape of meal, bacon, and molasses. But this is purchased upon the strength of the note that the land owner has been paying interest upon ever since last Christmas, and he must take the interest out of Uncle Billy in one way or another.

For notice, that while Uncle Billy has but just got the last of the goods for which his land owner gave a note before the cotton was planted, the note bore interest from date, and if the land owner does not get it out of Uncle Billy he loses it. And as Uncle Billy has three-fourths of the crop and the land owner but one fourth,

and as Uncle Billy has now eaten up his three-fourths, the 8 per cent. upon Uncle Billy's larger portion is equivalent to 24 per cent. upon the land owner's one-fourth; and if not collected of Uncle Billy goes far toward eating up what the land owner was to get for the use of the land.

Yes, Uncle Billy has eaten up his crop in advance of gathering it, or will have done so if he cannot make what he has in his wagon last until the crop is gathered and ginned.

In fact he will be fortunate if, when they come to settle after selling the cotton, he is found not to have overdrawn what the cotton brings, for if he has, then he is in debt—not to the merchant, for the merchant has not known him in the transaction, and has not trusted him, but in debt to his landlord, who in his turn is in debt to the merchant in the same amount.

But such a condition of affairs, if it proves to be the case, will worry Uncle Billy a good deal less than it will the land owner, for while the land owner's land and everything he has—mules, wagons, plows, everything—is security to the merchant, who will proceed to collect by law at his pleasure, the landlord must depend wholly upon Uncle Billy's ability and willingness to make it good to him.

And Uncle Billy's ability and willingness are about equally large, which is the same as saying that they are about equally small.

If he could not make a living such as the man whose land he has rented is willing to allow him, during the busy season when every member of the family from nine or ten years of age, up to the grandparents of seventy, can earn something hoeing cotton or picking it. If he cannot do this through the busy season, but comes out

in debt at the end of it, how is he to make a living and pay the debt during the comparatively idle season which follows the gathering of the crop.

True, the landlord might take Uncle Billy's steer, although it would break the old man's heart (for a day at least), but if he does he must feed the steer through the idle season and rent him to Uncle Billy to put in and tend a crop with next year, taking a little larger portion of the crop than before. But if he does this, Uncle Billy will only overdraw his share a little more this year than he did the last, and as he has not another steer, the loss falls upon the land owner in the end anyway; and he might as well let the old man keep his steer and forgive him the smaller debt now, as to take the steer and forgive him the larger debt next year.

If the landlord and Uncle Billy could ever get ahead enough to pay cash for what they live on there would be some chance for them to at least keep even, but when the war closed with Lee's surrender, the confederate soldier—and every man in Dixie's land was a confederate soldier—when the confederate soldier, in ragged uniform and broken shoes, or with no shoes at all, footed it home across the hills and over the mountains, he had nothing to begin life over again with but his land.

Both armies had lived off of his country for months; both armies had conscripted his stock, both had helped to consume his provisions, and one—the victorious army—had freed his slaves and rendered his money of no value. Only the land and his faith in himself were left to him, and with these he began anew.

Perhaps his wife had hidden out a mule or a steer and so kept it from being taken by the raiders from either side; possibly he found one that had given out upon the

march and which some tender hearted soldier or teamster had turned loose upon the way in disobedience of the general orders of the federal commanders to shoot all such and so prevent them from becoming of possible service to the enemy.

Possibly even, if a cavalryman, he had ridden one home from Appomattox, by permission of the federal general whose order to: "Leave the defeated confederates their horses as they would need them in making a crop" has given a greater lustre to his name than all the battles that were won under his leadership; a lustre that shines like a star even through the murkiness with which he surrounded his reputation when as chief magistrate of the nation whose armies he had led to victory, he consented to, and approved of, laws devised for the purpose of robbing the many to enrich the few.

Be this as it may, the returned confederate had the land and upon this began his life over again. Without money, without tools, without sufficient teams, with the necessity of giving employment to his former slaves or of seeing them die of starvation, yet with small means of making their labor profitable. Under such circumstances as these he had no choice but to mortgage land and everything, including the future crops, for food to sustain himself and his dependents until the crop should mature.

And so the mortgage note-system of credit was devised, under which the planter pays interest upon his supplies for months before he gets them, and, worse still, pays from twenty-five to thirty per cent. more for them than he could buy them at for cash.

For since he can trade with but the one merchant, the one who holds his note, it has become a custom that is well understood and expected by both parties, that there will be added to the price, of all goods sold under the

credit system, a percentage never less than fifteen and as high as fifty, over and above the cost price for the same goods.

Nor is this all. The notes given by the planter are made to fall due about the time the cotton will be ready to market, which compels the planter to sell at that time; and as nearly every planter has purchased his own and his renters' or laborers' supplies under this system, and must meet his notes when due, the principal portion of the cotton crop is per force put upon the market at about the same time, and is bought at such prices as the speculators in cotton choose to give, and these are such as enable only those who have been most fortunate in raising and securing their crops, or who are in possession of the best land, to meet their obligations in full.

Uncle Billy having a steer, and a landlord who has watched him closely, and only allowed him the actual necessities of life, may come out even. But there are a great many Uncle Billies who have no steers, and these will, in most instances, fall behind. This shortage comes upon the landlord, and together with what he is behind on his own family supplies, if any, will be added to the note given for next year's supplies, and this will be continued until between the planter and his renters, and laborers, they will have consumed the value of the farm and the title deeds will pass into the hands of the merchant, and the planter will himself become a renter, or find a piece of cheap, wild land somewhere, and begin anew.

But, beginning anew, he will never live in anything better than a rough board house; will never drive a top buggy, never have a piano or an organ in the house, nor send his children to school more than three months in the year.

The mortgage note-system of credit was devised for the purpose of transferring the profits of the cotton crop from the pockets of the planter and laborer, into those of the usurer and speculator, who benefit about equally by the system.

The few men in the South who are making more than a living, are those who, by some fortunate circumstances, have obtained sufficient capital to enable them to pay cash for the family supplies, both for themselves and their dependents.

At the close of the war, the states formerly in rebellion were at once opened to the influx of the national currency, at that time consisting almost wholly of greenbacks, and the volume being large, and cotton in demand, the ex-confederate received for his first crop, a price that went far toward setting him on his feet, and which, if continued, and backed by honest administration of proper reconstruction laws, would have made him, in a very few years, an ardent lover and enthusiastic supporter of the government, against which for four years, he had fought the fight of desperation.

But the contraction of the currency by the general government, under a pretended necessity for a return to specie basis, and of strengthening the public credit, checked and finally killed the tide of prosperity rapidly beginning to flow in upon the South, chilled the budding hopes of its people, compelled them to mortgage their lands in advance for the year's supplies, fastened upon them the mortgage note-system of credit, and in connection with the corrupt carpet-bag state government, embittered anew and yet more deeply the hearts of the Southern people against those of the North, and so made possible the "solid South" as against the "solid North," in maintaining which, the politicians upon both

sides of the line have been so active, and for which they have been so well paid by the powers they serve,—the money power whose head is in London, and whose right hand is "Wall Street."

Had those who controlled the affairs of the general government at the close of the war, been even moderately honest, they would have seen and known that instead of contracting the currency it should rather have been increased, to meet the increased need of it, due to the return to the productive walks of life in the North of a million men, and to the conquered South, now for the first time in four years, open to the influx of the nation's money, and so bound to absorb a large portion of that already afloat in the channels of trade and production at the North.

That the leaders, of both the Republican and Democratic parties, did see and understand this need, that they did see and appreciate the dire effects which a contraction would produce upon the entire country, North and South, is abundantly proven by the speeches made in Congress, and by the editorials and communications in the press of that day and period.

And, that, knowing this, they deliberately and intentionally sold the prosperity and liberties of the people in order to win the approval and share in the spoils of as greedy, conscienceless, and merciless a set of conspirators as ever ravaged a country or despoiled a people, is equally proven and fast becoming apparent to the great masses of their victims.

CHAPTER XXX.

Uncle Billy Soliliquizes about the Farmers' Alliance.—The Planters and the Jute Bagging Trust.—The Alliance and its Mission in the South.

"Git er long dar now, yo' ornery good-fer-nuffiin' steer yo' an' take dis yer load er poles out ob dese woods an' straight up to Mistah Johnsun's house ef yo' doan want me to jes' eberlastingly war dis *hickety out ober yo' back."

Uncle Billy had consumed the provisions purchased with the last order which he was to receive from the land owner of whom he rented, and was now engaged in hauling wood as a means of getting something further to live on.

For the jag of poles which he is now hauling he will get thirty-five cents, and as he has most probably been given the poles by some kindly disposed owner of woodland, the thirty-five cents will be all his, and, expended for corn meal and molasses, will keep his family for at least a couple of days.

If flush, Uncle Billy would undoubtedly prefer wheat flour to meal, for some portion of the time, but he has often eaten corn-pone with only water as a relish for days at a time, and is not at all disposed to complain if he can get corn-pone and molasses, although he is fond of side meat, devoted to fried chicken, and considers

* Hickory, a goad or whip of hickory.

'possum and sweet potatoes a dish fit for the Gods—in which latter opinion Uncle Billy is not so far out of the way as those who have never eaten of the dish might imagine.

Like many other aged negroes, Uncle Billy is fond of hearing the sound of his own voice, and is in the habit of talking both to himself and to his steer—oxen he calls him—much as he would talk to his wife or one of the children.

Perched upon the load of poles and bumping over a winding woods' road, used only occasionally and never worked, his position is neither one of very great ease nor of absolute safety; and it evokes frequent expressions and comments which are addressed in part to himself and in part to the steer.

"Look at him dar now!" he exclaimed, as the wagon gave a jolt which nearly unseated him. "Look at him; jes' went an run de off wheel plum ober dat dar log. Like to have frode de ole man clar offen his seat. Ef yo' do dat agin, sah, I war dis hickety out on yo' shore. Yes, sah; I will dat. See ef I doan. Whoa dar, whar yo' gwine; doan yo' know enough to keep de plain endurin' road?

"Spect yo' done los' yo' senses. Whoa, I tole yo'. Reckon I have to git down and teach yo' something!"

And the old negro climbed down off of his perch and "gee'd" and "haw'd" and backed until he managed to get the steer and wagon again into the roadway. After which he climbed upon the wagon and took his seat upon top of the load of poles.

"Go on dar now, an' see ef yo' can keep de road arter it dun been p'inted out to yo'. Who-up! Dar yo' go ergin, right plum ober dat rock. Why doan yo' hab sense enough to go roun' sich big rocks as dat one? Go

on dar now, an' see ef yo' can't do bettah nex' time."

Out of the woods, and into the main road leading to town, Uncle Billy is all right and rides at comparative ease, sitting astride the load of poles, and has tried to let his thoughts wander to other matters than the management of the steer, which now moves steadily forward at a speed of about two miles an hour, which is, however, quite satisfactory to Uncle Billy, who is in no greater hurry than the steer.

"I wonder, now," he soliliquized, "I jes' wonder what dem 'liancers gwine to do. Deed I does, fo' shore. I done hear Mistah Camp an a lot ob odder men say da gwine bus' de Baggin' Trus' and da gwine make better times fo' de po' folks; an den ergin I heard some odder men say dem 'liancers gwine play de debil an' brek de country up. Mighty curis goins on dese times, dere am fo' a fac', an' dis ole nigger ain' sho' he unnerstan' em.

"Dars Cunnel Jo, now; he mighty smart man, and he say de town am on a bloom. And den dars Mistah Camp; he say de 'liance gwine bus' de Trus'. An' den dese odder fellers, drummers, da say da was, do I done see no drums, and da say de 'liance gwine ruin de country, an Uncle Billy he doan know what to say. Look at dat fool oxen, now; jes' look at him, leabin' de plain endurin' road an runnin' off a pickin' grass dat a way. Reckon de ole man better git down an' lead him back into de road."

A half-hour later, while unloading his wood at Mr. Johnson's, a planter who had moved into town in order to give his children better school advantages, it occurred to Uncle Billy to seek some information of that gentleman, and he at once proceeds to do so.

"Mr. Johnson, what's all dis I hear 'bout de 'liance; be da gwine to bus' de country up? Case I heard some folks a talkin' dat way."

"Who did you hear talking that way, Uncle Billy?" returned Mr. Johnson with an amused smile, but willing to hear what the old man had to say.

"Oh I heard several folkses a talkin' ob it de odder day. Some ob em say de 'liancers da gwine bus' de Trus', and some say da gwine bus' de country, an' dis ole niggah he been wonderin' whedder in dat case he gwine be busted too?"

"I don't believe they can burst you much worse than you are now can they Uncle Billy?"

"Da might take my steer," said Uncle Billy doubtfully.

"That is so," replied Mr. Johnson, but the Alliance does not want to do anything of that kind Uncle Billy. The Alliance is an organization of the farmers through which they are striving to better their own condition and consequently the condition of their renters and laborers. Just now we are fighting the Jute Bagging Trust, that is, the men who make the jute bagging with which we cover our cotton in the bale. You bought some for covering your two bales you know, and had to pay five cents a pound more for it this year than you did last. Well that was because the men who make the bagging have formed what they call "A Trust." They have all joined together and agreed not to sell any bagging except at the increased price. They know we must have some covering for our cotton and they think we cannot get anything but the jute and that they can compel us to pay whatever they are a mind to ask. Well the Alliance is fighting them. It has had manufactured a great many thousand yards of cotton bagging, and its members are using it in place of the jute just as fast as it can be made, and no jute is being used by them except where the cotton cannot be manufactured and sent them in time to enable them to use it and get their cotton on the

market in time to pay their notes to the merchants as they become due."

"An is dat de Trus' da is a tryin' to bus'?" asked the old negro.

"Yes, that is what they are doing."

"An' da isn't gwine to bus' de country den?"

"No, the Alliance is not going to burst the country, Uncle Billy, but it may have to burst some other things besides the Bagging Trust. The people are finding out a good many things through the Alliance that they didn't know before."

The latter half of this sentence was addressed less to Uncle Billy than to Mr. Johnson's own consciousness, but Uncle Billy replied:

"Well dis ole niggah is mighty glad to know da isn't gwine to bus' de country. He is fo' sho'; fo' if da was to do dat I doan know what 'ud become of me an' de ole woman, I doan fer a fac'. G'long dar yo' fool steer yo'. What yo' tink yo' doin' I lack ter know. I 'clare I war dis hickerty clean out on yo' ornery back if yo' doan pay 'tention to what I'se tellin' yo'."

And the old negro drove off in the direction of his cabin.

As the outfit slowly climbed the hill there floated back upon the still evening air, the words, with which Uncle Billy, perched upon the front axle of the wagon kept himself and the steer company.

"Look at him dar now, look at dat fool oxen. What he tink he gwine do now I wonner. I 'clare ef yo' doan min' better what I tol' yo' I gwine war dis hickerty—"

The steer and the wagon and the old man disappear over the brow of the hill and commence the descent of

the other side, and what Uncle Billy was saying is lost to the reader and to history.

* * * * * * *

The Bagging Trust had organized for the purpose of putting up the price of an article which was considered absolutely essential to the marketing of the cotton crop, and the gauntlet thus thrown down was taken up by the Farmers' Alliance, and the fight was to the death.

Both parties to the contest understood this perfectly, and each put forth the utmost endeavor to win the victory.

Strange to say, the Alliance received little or no encouragement or sympathy from the country merchants with whom the planters had been in the habit of doing their trading, and who ought to have recognized the fact that their interests were with those upon whom they depended for their custom, and to have given them at least a moral support in their fight against one of the most dangerous and oppressive monopolies in the country.

It is indeed most unfortunate for all the people that the systems of exchange of the world have been such as to cause those who assist the wealth producers in exchanging the various commodities which they produce to imagine that their own interests are directly antagonistic to those of the men and women who produce the wealth.

That such is the case no one who is at all observant of such matters can have failed to perceive.

This feeling of antagonistic interests, between the producers and those engaged in the work of exchanging, comes to the surface whenever the producers unite together in any effort to protect themselves and better their condition, and, in the contest of the planters of the

Southern states against the Bagging Trust, was intensified by the fact that the planters, in considering ways by which to escape from the mortgage note-credit system, had conceived the idea of purchasing their family supplies at first hands, or where this was not possible, then to establish stores of their own upon the coöperative plan.

This of course brought them under condemnation of the merchants and was one of the causes that led them to feel less friendly to the Alliance than they otherwise might have done.

But the planters were thoroughly aroused and, through the Alliance, made a most determined fight upon the Trust. They appointed men to act as business agents for their members in the different states and in many counties, and through them contracted for cotton bagging to take the place of the jute bagging formerly used, and, so far as possible, held their cotton until a supply of the new covering could be manufactured and sent them.

Those composing the Trust were not less active.

Possessed of almost unlimited capital, and unscrupulous in the use of means through which to accomplish their ends, the Trust put forth its utmost strength and the fight was hot and bitter and for a time victory seemed undecided with which of the contending forces she should plant her banner.

In the contest, the Trust sought the assistance of the large cotton buyers of this country and of those who control the Cotton Exchange of Liverpool, England, the leading cotton market of the world, striving to induce them to refuse to purchase cotton covered with anything except jute.

They succeeded with the Liverpool Exchange, but

failed with the cotton buyers of this country, who feared that the planters would refuse to put their cotton upon the market at all, even to meet their maturing obligations to the merchants, if farther attempts to impose upon them in the interest of a monopoly was persisted in, and their cotton, covered in such wrappings as they selected, principally in cotton bagging, but sometimes in a coarse cloth, woven out of pine straw (the needles or leaves of the pine tree), was accepted by the country buyers, who shipped it to the centers of trade where it was purchased by the large dealers and, when re-pressed, as it always is before its shipment to Liverpool, the cotton bagging or other cover with which the planter had covered it, was replaced by jute, and in this condition forwarded to and received by the Liverpool Cotton Exchange.

The country cotton presses in general use throughout the cotton-raising states do not differ greatly from that of the hay presses in use at the North. These presses are operated by the same power which runs the gin that separates the cotton seed from the lint, and may be either horse power or a steam engine, but as, with such appliances as can profitably be used in the country, the cotton cannot be reduced to the small space considered desirable for shipping long distances, it is re-pressed by the large buyers at the trade centers, as Atlanta and New Orleans, in presses of immense power, and thus reduced to the smallest possible compass before being started upon its long journey to Liverpool, via New York, and it was in this re-pressing in the large cotton markets of the South, that the cotton and pine straw bagging was replaced by the jute.

However, the spirit shown by the planters, who gathered into the Alliance by thousands and tens of thou-

sands, was of so determined a character, and the use of cotton and pine straw instead of jute for covering the cotton bales so extensive, that the back of the Jute Trust was broken in a single season, and the price of jute bagging reduced to a more moderate figure, from which any unfair advance at any time in the future, will result, if indeed, it has not already resulted in forever excluding it from use as a covering for cotton.

But the victory of the planters over the Jute Bagging Trust had done more than to relieve them of the imposition sought to be imposed by the one monopoly of jute bagging. It had taught them the much needed lesson that by uniting they were sufficiently powerful to overthrow all monopolies and bid defiance to every form of imposition.

In their Alliance meetings they had talked of their wrongs until they began to have a pretty clear idea of their rights.

Their victory over the Jute Trust had given them confidence in themselves and in each other, and one of the first fruits of this greater self-confidence showed itself in a disposition to take a more active part in political affairs and to insist upon nominating men from among themselves for all offices, both state and local, instead, as heretofore, permitting it to be done by professional politicians or by rings and cliques in the towns and cities.

The result of this action on the part of the planters, acting through the Alliance, was to cause a split to occur, if not openly in all cases, at least covertly and in fact, between the Alliance men and their former political leaders, and gradually to open the eyes of the people to to the fact that they had been blindly following men who had betrayed them into the power of their worst enemies, the Corporations and Trusts, and this split was

induced by the action of the opponents of the Alliance in the towns and cities, who refused, in many instances, to support men nominated by conventions in which the Alliance men predominated, although such nominees were of the same political party as themselves, and the convention which nominated them had been regularly called by the legally accredited authorities of the party.

In some cases these men from the towns went so far as to organize in support of the opposition candidate, and, under the name of "Jeffersonian Democrats," to support the nominees of the Republican party for Congress, their object being to defeat the Democratic nominee simply because he was pledged by the Alliance to uphold the principles which the Alliance advocated.

Such action on the part of their former leaders awoke the rank and file to the fact that these former leaders cared nothing for the party except as it enabled them to obtain office, or in some way gain an advantage for themselves, and so did much to weaken their party ties, and render possible a union of the wealth-producers of all sections within a new party, whose motto should be that of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

Meantime the Alliances of the various states had met at St. Louis, Missouri, at Omaha, Nebraska, and at Ocala, Florida, and put before the country a platform of principles, or more properly speaking, a demand for the passage of certain specific legislation; the enactment of certain specific statutes; through the action of which they believed justice would flow to all men equally, and the present unjust distribution of wealth would give place to a better and more equitable one.

That the great body of voters South who made these demands expected them to be granted through the Democratic party there is no reason whatever to doubt.

They had been told that the Democratic party was the friend of the common people, and they believed it; and did not doubt that when the leaders of that party were made acquainted with their demands, and the reasons for them, they would hasten to comply, and so relieve the people of the burdens which they were fast coming to feel were intolerable and not to be longer borne.

But immediately on their demands being made public, the Democratic leaders, North and South, East and West, denounced them in unmeasured terms as unconstitutional, as unstatesmen-like, as destructive of the business interests of the country—in a word, as emanating from men who were either fools or crazy, and so unworthy of even a respectful consideration or answer.

The further result of this action on the part of the Democratic leaders could not have been different from what it was.

Almost in an instant the eyes of the voters were opened, and they saw how they had been deceived and misled in the past, and in that same hour the shackles of party fell from their limbs, and when the men of Kansas threw off the yoke of the Republican party and extended a hand in fraternal greeting to their brethren of the South, that hand was grasped with quick and ready sympathy and a new political party, pledged to the securing of equal and exact justice to all men, a party of the people, redolent of life and eager for action, stepped into the arena and offered battle to the plutocracy of the world.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Some Changed Conditions, and Some Conditions that May be Changed Later.

A middle aged man, that is to say, a man rather over than under forty years of age, walked, with firm step and bearing, up one of the prettiest streets in Smithville, and, stopping before one of the prettiest cottages of that quarter of the town, opened the gate and entered the grounds.

As he did so, a manly looking boy of eight or ten years came down the walk to meet him, followed by a shaggy Newfoundland dog of rather sober mein and dignified appearance. A woman, with a matronly look for one so young as she evidently was, stood upon the porch in expectant waiting for her husband, and upon the steps in front of her played two children—two little girls younger than the boy who had run down the walk to meet his father.

Vines climbed up the pillars of the veranda and twined themselves about the eaves and hung in pleasing festoons of flowers half way to the railing below.

The yard was large and finely set in grass. Evergreens and flowering shrubs scattered here and there added to the effect; and back of the cottage, and separated from the lawn by a low fence over which climbed morning-glories and cypress vines in graceful confusion, could be seen glimpses of a vegetable garden.

The cottage itself was neatly painted white, and had green blinds at all the windows, and though not very large, was yet commodious, and conveyed the idea of comfort and hospitality. The porches were wide, the windows large, and one, a bay window, was wreathed in vines; and in front of it a bed of roses bloomed, and loaded the air with their perfume.

The man, and the boy, and the great Newfoundland dog went side by side up the broad walk to the cottage, upon whose porch waited the wife and mother. As they came, the boy was between the other two, one hand in that of his father and the other toying with the shaggy coat of the dog. When they reached the steps the lady came forward to meet them, and laying her hands upon the shoulders of her husband put up her lips for a kiss, while the little girls left their play and clung to his legs, demanding to be taken up and kissed also; a demand which was complied with instantly, accompanied with a hug and loving words for each.

"Supper is ready, John, any time you are," said the lady.

"All right, Jennie, I'm ready now," returned the husband.

"Come, father," he added, turning toward the far end of the porch, where in a large easy chair sat a man whose attitude, not less than the crutches which lay against the railing of the porch in front of him, bespoke a cripple, but who now rose and hobbled forward with a cheerful air.

"Everything going on all right at the factory I reckon, John," he said pleasantly.

"Could hardly ask it to be better," replied the other. "Orders coming in every day. I think we shall have to

increase our force considerably, and that we had better do it at once."

"No doubt; no doubt. We should keep a little ahead rather than behind our orders." And Mr. Mason, for he it was, swung himself along the hall and into the pretty dining-room by the side of his son-in-law, John Nixon, and took the chair which his daughter Jennie drew back for him with a loving daughter's care.

And this cottage is John Nixon's cottage, and there is no mortgage of any kind against it. And John Nixon and his father-in-law, Mr. Mason, are owners and proprietors of a rapidly increasing manufacturing business, and are prosperous in a degree entirely satisfactory to them so far as the accumulation of wealth is concerned. Neither of them desire to become the possessor of millions. They ask only the fruits of their own talents, and their own toil expended in the production of wealth. They still desire and still work for the equal right of all men for the same reward for labor which they claim for themselves.

"I have made Jo Miller foreman of the shop, as you suggested," said Nixon, addressing Mr. Mason when, the meal over, they returned to the porch to enjoy the cooler air without doors.

"I am glad of it;" returned the other. "You were working too hard before, and this will make it easier for you, and enable you to give more of your attention to the correspondence and other office work, and in the end pay better than to have continued overseeing everything yourself outside and inside both. Miller is a good man in every way, and we were fortunate to get him."

"Yes, there is no doubt of that; and Miller was glad to come. He has always worked hard and been steady; but at wages such as even the best of mechanics have

been getting of late years it was hard to lay up anything after supporting a family in even moderate comfort. But on the wages we can afford to pay him as foreman he can at least save enough to buy a nice little home before many years, and both he and Mrs. Miller feel greatly elated over the prospect."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mrs. Nixon, breaking in on the conversation. "I remember how I did use to wish we could own our own home. I used to think that if we could buy even the little three-room cottage we rented when we were first married I would be perfectly contented and ask for nothing better so long as we lived; and I know other folks feel the same way."

"The three-room cottage was a palace compared to the one we kept boarders in," said Mr. Mason.

"Yes, but what a nice crowd of boarders we did have. They were all awfully poor; out of work more than half their time, but they always seemed to be hopeful and good-natured, and they never complained at what we had to eat, though often the food was wretchedly poor and occasionally almost scanty. I remember how sometimes it seemed as if I could not possibly get up a meal that anybody could eat out of what I had to do with, and I could not do any better on what the men could afford to pay for board."

"Well, they are all getting enough to eat now, if no more," said Nixon. "Everyone of them is at work for us except the 'silent member,' and he—you know—don't need to work at all unless he wants to."

"Wasn't it funny though," laughed Mrs. Nixon, "about his marrying that rich young widow? Folks do make such queer matches sometimes."

"What was there queer about the marriage of the 'silent member?'" asked her husband smilingly.

"Oh, I don't know; only he was so quiet and so odd, and she is such a talker; just runs on like a mill race—"

"A babbling brook say," interrupted her husband.

"Well, babbling brook then, and never giving her husband nor anybody else a chance to get a word in oftener than once an hour, and—"

"That's as often as the 'silent member' wants to speak," again interposed Nixon. "He never did say anything oftener than that except on very rare occasions."

"Well, I am glad if he's satisfied and comfortable, and I really think he is, for he is growing fat, and he certainly does look as though he enjoyed life."

"Yes, and he evidently feels proud of his wife."

"And she is undoubtedly fond of him. I never go there that she isn't running out in the kitchen every half hour to see how the cook is getting along with preparations for dinner, or sending some of the children down town after 'something you know your Pa is fond of.'"

Everybody laughed at this and at the picture it called up in their minds of the "silent member" and his never-silent but kind-hearted wife.

After a pause in the conversation, Nixon spoke. "I received a letter from Congressman Swanson to-day," he said.

"What did he write about," asked Mr. Mason; "anything connected with the machines?"

"No; he wanted my opinion upon the Ocala platform and 'the sub-treasury bill,' as it is called."

"Indeed! And have you answered it?"

"No, but I shall. I owe him that much of a courtesy at least."

"You do not suppose he has any intention of sup-

porting any such measures as those demanded by the Alliance at Ocala, do you?"

"I am afraid not. In fact I do not in the least suppose he intends anything of the kind. Mr. Swanson, as we have the best of means for knowing, is a man of the kindest heart and of good impulses, and under different surroundings would have been a very able, and no doubt very earnest defender of the rights of the people; but surrounded as he is by men who have neither a knowledge of the needs of the people, nor the will to do them justice if they had the knowledge, and bound to them by those ties of good fellowship and good living which men of Swanson's make find it hardest of all to break away from, he will always be willing to see the people prosperous, always wish them to be, but will never sacrifice himself for them because he can never be made to believe that the sacrifice would be of any particular service to anybody."

"With his long experience in Congress, and the continual legislation of that body upon financial matters, Swanson has never yet acquired a clear understanding of the financial question. This, not because he is incapable of doing so, but because he feels that to do so would be useless. Knowing as he does and has always done, that neither of the old political parties will ever consent to a change in the financial policy of the government in the interest of the common people, he has preferred not to trouble either his brain or his conscience with the acquisition or possession of an understanding of the subject, lest understanding it, he should be pained by a knowledge of what the people suffer and why, but without the power to relieve them. He imagines that it is the fate of the people to be as they are, and to know more of their sufferings and aspirations and yet be

unable to relieve them, would give him pain. And not wishing to endure pain, he refrains from putting himself in the way of pain."

"But why does he ask for your opinion of the sub-treasury bill if he does not wish to understand the financial question?" asked Mrs. Nixon.

Her husband was silent for a moment and then said: "My dear, Mr. Swanson is a politician. He knows that the sub-treasury bill is being discussed by the farmers and planters in their Alliances, and by the laboringmen from one end of the country to the other; and he wishes to know how strongly it is going to be defended and supported by the voters in his district, so that he may know how much or how little to say regarding it in his public utterances."

"I suppose you are right John, but I do hate to feel that Mr. Swanson is not all the laboring-people could wish him to be. He has always been so kind to us that I cannot help thinking of him as a friend."

"He has certainly been a friend to us personally;" returned Nixon. "It was through him we learned that in involving your father as a partner in his own failure, Mr. Hardiman had—unintentionally no doubt—restored your father to his legal right in the patent upon the machines Hardiman was manufacturing, and that on the settlement with the creditors this was overlooked or considered valueless, and thus still remained the property of your father. I do not forget either that it is upon this that your father and I have built up our present prosperous business. Nothing could have been kinder than Mr. Swanson's action in the matter. He discovered the fact accidentally, while looking up some legal matters for some one else, and came at once to us with it; and never did, and never would accept a penny of

compensation for all that he did. We all feel very kindly toward him and would gladly do him a favor if we could; but we must not let our feelings for him blind us to his faults as a legislator."

"Of course not John, dear. I would not have you do a thing to return Mr. Swanson to Congress again if there is any chance for anyone who will do the people better service."

"I shall hate to work against him; I always have disliked to work against him, but have done so every election since the first one, when he was nominated by us and then endorsed by his own party. It was my duty to do so, and I have done it; and next election I think we shall defeat him and elect one of our own men."

"Well, he don't need the office any more anyway; that is, so far as money is concerned."

"No, they say he married a quarter of a million, and that he got a nice girl for a wife in the bargain."

"I'm glad of that. With a nice wife and plenty of money, he won't need to feel bad if he is defeated."

"Not if he has got as nice a wife as I have." Nixon put his arm about the back of his wife's chair.

"I think, John," said Mr. Mason, who had been silently smoking his pipe and taking no part in the conversation for some minutes,—"I think John, that our people are going to nominate you for Swanson's place next time. I know they are talking about it, and you are the most popular man among them, so far as I can hear. I think you can go to Congress in ninety-two, if you want to."

"I don't know that I do," said Nixon, thoughtfully. "I know that there is some talk among a few of my friends of running me if I will accept, but I am not sure that I wish it. I have never had much of an itching for

office. You and Jennie know that; and now that our business is prospering and we are comfortably fixed, I don't feel any inclination whatever to break up our method of living. If I were to go to Congress, either I should have to leave you all here, and see you but seldom, or take Jennie and the children to Washington with me, which would be a breaking up of our home life that I doubt would be more satisfactory. No, I don't think I want to go to Congress."

"But I think I should like to see you elected," said Mrs. Nixon. "You know, John, how proud I always am of you, and I should dearly love to see you honored as you deserve. The people owe it to you anyway, for you have done more than any other one man in this district, if not in the state, to help educate them. You are always 'educating and agitating,' you know."

Nixon laughed. "Yes," he said, "that's true. I believe in agitation and education, and I guess I have done my share of it on these reform questions. But as to owing, the people owe nothing to anybody in the way of office. The duty of the voters is to the country, to society, and not to any individual, no matter who or what he may be, or what he has done. Their duty is to select for each office the one among them who is best qualified to serve the public in the position for which he is selected; and the fact that he has served them well in one capacity, gives him no claim whatever upon them for office or position of any kind."

"But the fact that ohe has served the people well, is evidence that he is worthy to be honored and trusted."

"Certainly; and it is their duty to judge of the fitness of a man by the best evidence they can get. Their duty is to select the best man; but it is a duty they owe to themselves, to society, and not to the individual selected.

What I am contending against is the idea so prevalent that a man can, by doing a service to the public, thereby obtain a claim against the people, or against the voters of the country, which they are bound to recognize and pay by electing him to office. Under this idea the claim to office once recognized is perpetuated so long as the recipient of the office refrains from doing any overt act which puts a quietus upon his claim.

"It is upon this theory, that they can, by doing the public a service, create a claim to office that the voters are bound to recognize, that the politicians work, that schemers scheme, and that some of the most unscrupulous men in the country get into and retain office."

"But if the people ask a man to serve them in office, isn't it his duty to do so?" asked Mrs. Nixon. "I am sure I have often heard you say it was."

"You are trying to trap me into agreeing to accept a nomination to Congress if it is offered me," laughed Nixon. "I mistrust that you want to prove to a certain gentleman of our acquaintance, that in refusing to marry one Congressman you did not throw away your only chance to be a Congressman's wife; is that it, sweetheart?" and he pinched his wife's cheek and toyed with her hair.

"Maybe so," answered Mrs. Nixon, leaning her head on her husband's shoulder, and looking up in his face. "Maybe so, John; I want the whole world to know what a grand and noble, and talented husband I have, and the world never will know if you don't let it prove you in a position where it will see and hear you. I want you to go to Congress John, if the people ask you to, for there is no one anywhere who will be more true to their interests than you will be, or who knows their needs or understands the effects of legislation better than you do."

Nixon kissed his wife.

"Your faith in me is always perfect, Jennie," he said. "As perfect as our love for each other. I ought, indeed, to be a true man, for I have a true woman for a wife."

"And will you accept if they ask you to go to Congress?"

"I'll consider it if I am ever asked to; but it is a good while before another election, little wife. Many things may occur before then. There are others besides me who have worked earnestly, and ably, and faithfully to educate the people upon these questions; and the people may well prefer another to me as their spokesman in Congress."

"I know they won't," said his wife. And here the subject dropped and was not again referred to during the evening.

But if John Nixon is offered the nomination for Congress by the People's party in '92, the probabilities are that he will accept it.

If he is any way slow about responding when the call upon him is made, Jennie will answer for him and it will be accepted with pleasure; and he will be elected, and Jennie will have married a Congressman after all.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In which Mr. Nixon Replies to Congressman Swanson's Letter Asking His Opinion of the Sub Treasury Btll.

"To Hon. Horace Swanson, M. C.,
H. R. Washington, D. C.

"*My Dear Sir:*—Your letter of recent date, in which you do me the honor of asking my opinion of the measures proposed in what is known as the Sub-Treasury Bill, was received in due time, and I take the opportunity of my first leisure hour in which to reply at such length as may be done in a communication of this kind.

"You may, perhaps, recall to mind a conversation which we once held together some years ago, when you were first a candidate for Congress, in which we agreed that the sole legitimate use of money was to make exchanges of wealth.

"As, however, the justice and wisdom of the demands of the people as expressed through the Ocala platform and the Sub Treasury Bill, hinge upon this point, of the natural and legitimate uses of money, you will pardon me for briefly referring to it here.

"To start with, then, until wealth has been produced there can be no use for the tool with which exchanges of wealth are made; but when wealth has been produced, then those who have produced it have need of some medium, some tool, through or by use of which, they can exchange among themselves that which they have produced.

"If it were possible to conceive of a community of people who had produced wealth in its thousand different forms, yet were entirely without money, we would

clearly perceive what is the character and use of money, as also who had need of and a right to possess it.

"Unable, from the total absence of money, to exchange one with another what they had produced, these people, being sufficiently intelligent to have produced wealth in many forms would naturally seek to devise some tool of exchange, something which should act as a medium by which they could each exchange that which he had produced for something produced by another, of which he had need; and this tool—this medium of exchange—when devised, of whatever character it should be, or of what material made, would constitute what we call money to them.

"Now, who in that community would have use for that tool, that medium of exchange (money) when it should have been created?

"Certainly not those who had produced no wealth, and so had none for exchange, but those who had produced, and therefore had wealth for exchange would have use for the tool of exchange.

"Money to that people (as indeed it is to any other) would be as clearly the tool of exchange as a plow is the tool of agriculture, or a plane and a square of mechanics; and no one who had nothing, neither labor nor labor products to exchange, could have more use for the tool of exchange, as such, than those who did not wish to till the soil or work in the arts would have for a plow, or a plane, or a square.

"If this tool of exchange, this money, devised or selected by this community, be itself a commodity, the product of labor, as plows, planes, or a piece of metal beaten or pressed into a certain shape, then it is clear that only those who have produced wealth in this particular form will have money at the start; and only those can acquire it legitimately who produce something to exchange for it; and the fact that any possess it who have not produced will be proof positive that they have acquired it wrongfully, unless, indeed, it is a gift to them from those who have produced it.

"Again, if, instead of making money out of a commodity, or of accepting some particular commodity as

the tool of exchange, this community decides to use the credit of the community as a tool of exchange, or if its members agree, one with another, to accept as a medium of exchange certificates signed by one of their members selected for that purpose, stating that there has been deposited with him, as their representative, labor products of a certain value expressed in the face of the certificates. Here, also, only those who have created wealth can have added to the credit of the community, or have to deposit that upon which to receive a certificate to be used as a tool of exchange. And those who have produced nothing either with hand or brain which their fellows regard as of value, and are willing to give something in exchange for, will be unable to exist in that community except upon the charity and sufferance of the wealth producers. Now I can see no reason why these wealth producers should make the tools of exchange and give them to the idle among their number, borrowing them again as they have need, and thus enable the idle not only to continue to live in idleness, but to so tax them for the use of this tool as to enable them to live in luxury, while they remain in poverty and in want.

"No argument is needed to prove that there is no commodity of suitable character and in sufficient quantity from which to make the tools of exchange needed by this or any other civilized and progressive people. If it were not a point conceded by all, the existence of banks of issue, and the presence in the channels of trade of bills of exchange, drafts, checks, and similar evidences of credit, would be sufficient proof of the fact claimed.

"The demands set forth in the Sub Treasury Bill (for they may properly be regarded as demands, since they have been substantially endorsed and will be insisted on by all the leading labor organizations of the country, including the Farmers' Alliance, North and South)—the demands set forth in the Sub Treasury Bill are based, first, upon the fact, universally conceded, that there is no commodity suitable for the making of these tools of exchange; and, secondly, upon the further fact that only those who have wealth to exchange have any legitimate use for the tool of exchange, and that to put it into the

hands of the idle is to give to them unlimited power of taxation over the industrious, and the demand is that the credit of the government, legally expressed, and in proper form, shall constitute the tools of exchange, and that these tools shall be loaned to whomsoever of the producers of wealth have need of them and can give proper security for their return at the time agreed upon; and it is further declared, that land and non-perishable labor products are such security. To say that the producers of wealth have need for and a right to the tools of exchange, and then refuse to let them have these tools upon such security as they have to give, would be an insult and a cruel satire. The fact is, however, that labor products first and the land next, are the best security that exist, and are in fact, and in the last analysis, all the security there is in existence, and the credit of the government, loaned upon labor products as provided by the Sub Treasury Bill, becomes a certificate of the fact that the holder thereof has produced wealth of the value expressed on the face of the certificate (or bill, money), that this wealth has been deposited with the representative of the whole community, and in their name, and that the holder of the certificate (money) is therefore entitled to reimbursement by the community, or to the return of the thing deposited, on demand, and surrender of the certificate. Under this plan, both the individual and the community (government) are secured against loss; the tools of exchange are supplied directly and at cost, to those, and those only, who have produced wealth, and therefore have need of the tool of exchange, and they are supplied in such quantities as their needs demand.

"Whether the details of the bill, as at present framed, are the best, in all respects that can be devised, is a question upon which I am not now prepared to decide. It is one that requires and should receive the most careful consideration at the hands, not only of Congress, but of the people of the whole country. I have given to it such thought as I have been able during the few days that have elapsed since its introduction, and will say frankly, that I see no serious objections to any of its

provisions. The character and number of commodities, which should be accepted as security for the issue of certificates of credit (loan of money), may well constitute a question for discussion among the people, and by those whose votes are necessary to the enactment of the bill into a law.

"My own opinion, at present, is that it should be so extended as to include labor products in other forms than those of the farmers and planters.

"The mechanic and artisan, equally with the producers of the food supply, has need of the medium of exchange, and I see no reason for excluding him from the direct benefits of the provisions of the bill.

"The most carefully prepared safe-guards against the issuing of certificates of credit (the loaning of money), in excess of the value of the deposit made as security, or upon such commodities as are perishable, or are liable to sudden fluctuation in value, should of course be provided. The danger to be apprehended from the latter cause—a sudden decline in price—will not, I think, be very great, as under a wise and equitable system of finance, such as is contemplated in the bill under consideration, the natural law of supply and demand will be left free to operate, and will do so in a way to prevent anything like over-production or under-consumption in any particular commodity, and especially so in those staple commodities upon which it is proposed that loans shall be made, and so will prevent sudden or great fluctuations in prices. The certainty of this proving to be so, will the more readily be perceived when it is remembered that under such a system of loans to the producers speculation in labor products will be almost wholly prevented, and corners upon such, an absolute impossibility.

"In my judgment, there can be but two classes of logical objectors to the principle involved in the bill.

"The first class is composed of those who profit by the present iniquitous financial system to live in idleness off of the toil of others, and who may logically maintain that any change must be to their detriment. Secondly,

are those who honestly question the fitness of the people for self-government.

"To the first class of objectors, neither I, nor the wealth-producers of the country, of whom I am one, have any further answer to make. We have pleaded for justice as long as we intend to plead. We now assume control and are preparing to enact justice.

"To the second class we have this reply to make:

"We do not close our eyes to the fact that the enormous influx of ignorant foreigners to this country during the past few years is a source of danger to free institutions, especially so when coupled with the fact that those who have controlled the politics and legislation of the country since the war have done much to corrupt the people, confuse their sense of justice, and weaken their moral character; and these facts render necessary an extra measure of care in dealing with any matter of legislation. But those who have given shape to the demands of the people as expressed in the Sub Treasury Bill, and in the Ocala and St. Louis platforms, have faith still in the people and believe that with increased responsibility there will come an increase of thoughtful watchfulness, intelligent effort to understand economic questions, and of wise and unselfish desire to act for the common good that will carry them safely past any errors of judgment that may be made manifest at the beginning, and lead them safely at the end into the harvest field of their desires.

"It is upon such faith in the people alone that Republics are founded and those who fear to place directly upon the shoulders of the people the control of whatever machinery is necessary to the running of government, really and at heart consider the people incapable of self-government.

"I imagine, however, that the majority of those who argue the danger of putting too great responsibility upon the people as by government ownership of railroads or the loaning of money direct to the people without the intervention of the banks, fear that the people will prove themselves too capable of self-government rather than the opposite.

"The immediate effect of the Ocala and St. Louis and Omaha platforms, and of the Sub Treasury Bill, if enacted into law, will be to place the tool of exchange directly into the hands of those who, having produced wealth, rightfully, have wealth for exchange. Only those who have produced wealth, can, under the provisions of the bill, obtain any of the tools of exchange at first hand or directly from the government.

"This is certainly as it should be, for to place it in the hands of the non-producers is not only to enable them to live in idleness off of the proceeds of the toil of others but is to give them unlimited power of taxation over every wealth producer in the whole land.

"Such engines of taxation have been and are the National Banks, to whom instead of to the producers of wealth the government has been giving (it can hardly be called a loan) the certificates of credit (money) for the last two decades. Such indeed are all banks of issue, whether state or national in their character, and such the people will never again tolerate in this country.

"With the tools of exchange in their own hands, and costing them little more than the expense of printing and signing, and with proper limitation of land-ownership (which latter is, however, a matter not considered by the Sub Treasury Bill), the wealth producers will control their own productions, and those who refuse to produce anything which others consider of any value, will, when what they now have is consumed, take their proper position in society—that of paupers without character or influence—while labor will at once appear to be what it is: the Creator of all wealth, the only legitimate road to the acquisition of riches, or honor, the safest and indeed the only conservator of the morals of the people.

"The loaning of money upon interest will cease to be a business.

"Since the people will thus supply themselves with the tools of exchange (money, certificates of production and of deposit with the government), no producer of wealth will borrow, or need to borrow at interest, of his neighbors; but since all producers will retain the full benefit of their labor, all such as are not spendthrifts will

speedily accumulate a capital of their own which will enable them to produce wealth much more rapidly and cheaply than under existing systems, and as this increase of material wealth in the hands of the masses will give them increased love for literature, the arts, and all that helps to refine their natures, those whose tastes run to the creation of literature and art will find higher and more general appreciation and surer compensation than is possible among a people whose every thought and every struggle is for bread.

"Thus do I conceive that humanity will be lifted up and ennobled and purified by the enthronement of justice in the land; justice which is but leaving in the hands of the laborers the products of their own toil.

"This I believe to be the principles embodied in the Sub Treasury Bill and in the demands of the people expressed in their platform of principles adopted at Ocala.

"And now before closing this already lengthy letter, allow me to say a few words in answer to some of the objections which I have heard raised against the bill.

"Of its constitutionality I will say nothing. You are fully capable of estimating at their true worth the assertions emanating from certain quarters that the bill is unconstitutional, and I will only call your attention to the peculiarity, if that is the proper word, of a charge of unconstitutionality coming from men and organizations who, like the National Banks, have been the beneficiaries of enactments exactly similar in their nature to the one now proposed in the interest of the people instead of the banks.

"Of the expense and cumbersomeness of the proposed system a word also.

"The estimated cost of the warehouses which would be needed to meet the demands of the people under the bill is fifty million dollars.

"Suppose it were five hundred million instead—if the people need warehouses shall they not build them?

"They have made donations of money and land to build railroads and have been told that it was a good investment although others and not themselves or the government owned the roads after they were built.

They have issued certificates of credit (money) to the banks at one per cent. and have been told that it was the proper thing to do although they were compelled immediately to borrow them back at eight to fifteen per cent.

"As communities, as incorporated cities and towns, and as individuals, they have been urged to tax themselves to help build factories and shops, warehouses and street railways, and have been told that it paid them to do so, although not one brick, nor one clapboard, nor one cross-tie of all that was thus builded belonged to them when the structures were completed. How is it then that it would be such bad policy for the people to build some warehouses and own them?

"With their own warehouses, in which they may deposit their products of a proper character, receiving upon them as security a safe proportion of their value in certificates of deposit, or money, it will be at once and forever beyond the power of speculators to corner any of the products of the country, and being thus freed from the power of the greedy few, the producer will receive the price which the law of supply and demand fixes upon his products.

"Instead of being an expensive system of exchange and storage, there is not a feature about the proposed sub-treasury plan that is not infinitely cheaper than that at present in vogue. The greatest difference is, however, that as things now are, a few men own and run the warehouses, and themselves fix the compensation which they themselves receive; a few men only, and these the non-producers, are supplied by the government with the tools of exchange, while under the plan proposed by the bill in question the people themselves will own the warehouses, and to them will be issued the certificates of credit, and they, and not the idle, and the speculator, and the usurer, will grow rich.

"If I have made this letter too long, or have taxed your patience with my emanations, you have my excuse in my earnest desire to see justice done to the wealth producers of this country and of the world, and in my faith in the wisdom and justice of the demands made by the

people, and set forth in the platforms adopted by them at St. Louis, at Ocala, at Omaha, and finally at Cincinnati, and which embrace, and in a measure are embraced in the Sub Treasury Bill.

"And now, my dear sir, you will, I think, believe me when I say that I am not unmindful of the many kindnesses you have done to me and mine, and that should opportunity offer I shall be glad to return them in kind.

"I feel assured that you will be pleased to know that our business is prospering, and that myself and family, which includes Mr. Mason, are well, and that both myself and Mrs. Nixon are pleased to believe in your continued domestic happiness, which we understand to be equal to our own—which is, I assure you, very great.

"I am, my dear sir, yours truly and respectfully,

"JOHN NIXON."

Congressman Swanson lounged in his seat in the House of Representatives at Washington.

One leg was thrown carelessly over a corner of the desk, and he twirled a pair of gold-bowed nose glasses in one hand as he listened with passive interest to a harangue which one of the leaders of his party in the House was making.

This speech, which was intended for home consumption rather than for effect upon members of Congress, was a mixture, in about equal proportions, of protective tariff and Southern outrages upon the negro, and was in reply to a speech made the day before by a member of the opposite party, in which federal bayonets, free trade, and threatened negro supremacy had been the stimulus to oratory.

Both speeches were to be sent out to the voters of the country, North and South, at the expense of the people, and much was hoped from them of a renewal of sectional hatred and partisan bitterness. Arrangements had been made with the House stenographer to insert

"Laughter," and "Applause," and "Tremendous Cheering," at proper intervals, and if enough of these were not injected by that functionary, the members who delivered the speeches will insert them to-morrow or the next day, when the public printer sends them proof of their speeches for that purpose, before printing a hundred thousand of each, and delivering them properly wrapped and franked at the post-office for free passage through the mails.

One of the boy pages passed down the aisle of the House with letters and papers for the different members laying them upon the desks as he passed.

Congressman Swanson glanced at his leisurely, turning each over in turn and glancing at the post-mark. Seeing one from Smithville he opened and read it with some show of interest in his look and attitude.

When he had finished reading he folded it, replaced it in the envelope and put both into his pocket.

"I wish I knew," he was saying to himself, "just how near Nixon is right in his ideas of things."

He relapsed once more into his former careless attitude with one leg thrown over the corner of his desk, and again gave his attention to what his brother Congressman was saying.

THE END.

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I have given the book a full perusal. It is the most timely book that has been published. Its execution is very remarkable as a piece of book-making. It is not a work of fiction but exhibits startling truths that are stranger than fiction in regard to the horrible defects in our system of land grants and disposal and occupation of public lands, that must arouse the people and Congress to the necessary remedies to protect honest and industrious settlers and their families from being wronged by land companies and land grabbers. I wish that a copy could be put in the hands of and read by every member of both branches of Congress.—*Gen. B. F. Butler.*

Somehow the book got hold of me, and I could scarcely lay it down until I had finished it. From the very first sentence it held my close attention. It is the portrayal of the hopeless struggle of a working man against the might of corporate wealth. Would God it were a fiction, but the facts given in the margin prove that the story is true to life. If this book could have a million readers it would help to make such crimes impossible beneath the Stars and Stripes.—*Chaplain C. C. McCabe.*

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